Symbolic Violence via the Principle of Equality of Opportunity:

The mechanism of persisting structure of social inequality

in a village community in contemporary Japan

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Abstract

In contemporary society, a strong belief in the inevitability of meritocracy exists, mediated via the idea of Equality of Opportunity. Generally overshadowed by this widespread belief in the ultimate fairness of available opportunity and competition, there has been little discussion in recent years regarding the Rawlsian shift of the egalitarian principle that occurred in the 1970s. In my view, any shift of perspective regarding the egalitarian principle in a given society necessarily indicates the existence of changes in that society's social reality regarding social inequality. Taking this consideration as my starting point, I find that existing egalitarian principles and their practice reveal that the idea of Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO), hand in hand with meritocracy, functions as a translator of the existing structures of social hierarchy into politically justifiable disparities between individuals. This is to say that the existing structures of social inequality have been perpetuated while acquiring different justifications and appearances. I approach the underlying mechanism of persisting social inequality by using the theoretical framework of *symbolic violence* proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. His theoretical framework suggests that the existence of social inequality is justified because individual social positions are misrecognised as being the direct results of individual achievements via meritocracy. Widespread belief in fair social competition can thus contribute to concealing existing structures of social hierarchy behind the logic of equality and freedom.

My thesis is empirically based on a rural fishing village in Japan. In this village, the social hierarchy existing in the previous feudal era has been perpetuated and institutionalised in a locally specific manner. At the same time, the dynamism of neo-liberal shift of the governing discourse in the community is visible in the on-going process of a recently initiated community-building project. I selected this village as a locality where state governance and local structures of social inequality converge. My fieldwork served the purpose of testing the validity of my theoretical framework. My overarching research question is: *Is a concept of life as being the direct result of personal achievements internalised and acted upon by individuals to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality in the society in which they live?* In order to answer this question in the specific case of the residents in the rural village, I divided it into two sub-questions. Firstly, regarding the recently initiated government *community-building projects* programme, I ask, *Who are actually "the motivated" in a community-building project in a village, according to its existing structure of social inequality?* Secondly, regarding the outcomes of community-building projects and their impact at the individual level, *Is the idea of life, embodied in FEO, internalised and used by the residents of the village to justify their social positions in the village?*

My empirical study shows that the families that were powerful during the feudal era now occupy the highest social positions in the community-building project. Furthermore, both the powerful and the marginalised members of the local society accept their social positions in the community as being the direct results of their own individual achievements, without any conscious intention to perpetuate the feudal hierarchy of power. Given these affirmative answers to my research question, hermeneutically, I establish the explanatory power of my theoretical framework. At the meta-theoretical level, I argue that my study results contribute to demonstrating that the characteristics of social inequality in a given society are necessarily historically specific and therefore heterogeneous. However, and importantly, the mechanism of perpetuation can be identical in different societies.

Keywords

Social Inequality, Economic Disparity, Symbolic Violence, Neo-liberalism, Japan

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. In search of a research topic

In today's society, economic disparity has become such a large problem that it can no longer be ignored, even in our own everyday lives. We can find alarming signs of unequal reality everywhere; phenomena concerning the unequal social reality are reported, debated and studied under different headings – gap between the rich and the poor, elite politics, depopulation and aging societies, privatisation of natural resources, persisting situations of gender inequality, racism and physically and mentally disabled among many other issues. As it is one of the most important political issues in today's society, the amount of knowledge related to the topic of social inequality and economic disparity is abundant. However, an abundance of information about the phenomenon does not necessarily mean that we understand how such social injustice exists, how it can persist, and how it is experienced. In my view, without understanding how the unequal social reality actually works, it is not possible for us to initiate any type of change to reduce social injustice.

In fact, it is only a recent endeavour to understand the nature of social inequality in relation to economic disparity in the contemporary neo-liberal capitalist society. In his series of works, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) endeavoured to elucidate the mechanism, under which the structure of social hierarchy of the past is unknowingly perpetuated and experienced as socio-economic disparity in the contemporary French society. He teaches, in the theoretical framework of *habitus*, the existence of social hierarchy of the past has been perpetuated symbolically. Particularly in contemporary society, this occurs while everyone in a given society, both the powerful and the powerless, more or less perceive their social position as appropriate, in accord with the universal logic of domination: *meritocracy*. In short, everyone in a given society somehow contributes to the perpetuation of social inequality via accepting one's socioeconomic position as one's achievement. His theoretical framework encourages us to tackle the aforementioned political issues, domestic or international, as relevant issues for everyone. Indeed, his legacy has stimulated and influenced a various study fields of social inequality and disparity worldwide. However, regrettably, when it come to the application his idea to the geographical area of my special interest, namely Japan, the number of study result remains far from being satisfactory. This

familiar but understudied situation motivated me to choose social inequality in Japan as my overall topic of study.

Though, any attempt at knowledge production is necessarily subjective. This means that no matter how much I justify my study result as objective and reasonable, my choice of study topic, theory, methods and even my way of interpreting data is necessarily influenced by my preferences. In this sense, the retrospective reflection on how I came to decide to study the specific study topic will merit reflexivity of this study. At the very beginning of my doctoral study, I was interested in studying the topic of elites. This study interest derived from the topic for my Master's thesis: the constructed identity of Japanese bureaucrats inside and outside of the Ministries. In this study, I observed a discrepancy between media discourses, which had constructed bureaucrats as elites and, the internal discourse within the Ministries, which had posited themselves as mere public employees. In my view, this disagreement resembled to the one, to which the scholars of elite study have long faced. I elaborate.

The term *elites* became widely used in Europe in the late nineteenth century, and adopted to the U.S. and the U.K. only in 1930s. The early scholars, who systematically studied the topic of elites, were Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Gaetano Mosca (1858-1941). Despite the fact that it is still a young branch of sociology, a number of scholars have endeavoured to elucidate the nature of elites since.[1] In 1959, one of the most influential scholars of elites, Wright C. Mills (1916-1962) asserted the significance to make clear distinction between elite theory and class theory in order to avoid further confusion between a various terminologies such as ruling class, elites, political class and so on.[2] Since then, the two major schools of elite theory — functionalist and moralist— have endeavoured to determine the nature of elites without touching upon the class structure in a given society. On one hand, the functionalist school defines elites as individuals who have achieved high social positions in business, politics or academic field, regardless of their social backgrounds. According to this view, the achievements of elites are solely based on their merits, and the prestige of being a member of the elites derives only from their social position, not from the individual herself. On the other hand, the moralist school defines elites on the basis of their moral superiority. This view finds its roots in the understanding of elites in ancient Greece posited by Aristotle.

[1] For example, there are Mills (1959b), Bottomore (1964; 1993), Keller (1979), Rothacher (1993), Hartmann (2007), Higley and Burton (2001), Higley and Pakuluski (2007) and Higley (2012)
[2] See Bottomore (1964:1993), Keller (1979) and Hartmann (2007).

Unsurprisingly, one of the major critics on these academic endeavours regarding the nature of elites is the scholar of social class. It is now well-established knowledge in the study field of social class that the group identities among members of one social class and so-called class-consciousness do not actually exist in social reality. If so, there must be no self-identification of elites as well. This leads to the conclusion that the category of elites is a creation of social scientists. Today's elite study is at the stage of overcoming this criticism by exploring the nature of the relationship between elites and class structures.[3] In search of the elusive elite, I set out to define elites, albeit provisionally, as a small number of individuals who exercise considerable amount of power over the rest of the members of a given society, with or without such an intention. This definition clearly indicates that there is an unequal power relationship between elites and the other members of a society; I grasp elite as one type of inequality in a society. At the same time, it is somewhat different from the ongoing discriminatory situation against a certain gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, physical or mental disability as such. In the process of study, it became increasingly apparent that there are at least two kinds of inequality: socially problematised ones and socially naturalised ones.

This reflection led me to be interested in Bourdieu's research on inequality. In fact, Bourdieu was one of the first sociologists to overcome the long-standing dichotomy between elite theory and class theory by interpreting both as structures of inequality. Bourdieu's theoretical standpoint renders Pareto's still influential idea of *the circulation of elites*, which assumes that regime changes occur when one group of elites is replaced by another group of elites, apparently false.[4] From Bourdieu's perspective, the replacement of a group of elite does not happen; rather, the elite structure transforms itself and persists. I saw a space for a further research in the topic of meritocratic elite selection, which functions as a justification for the existence of social inequality.

It was around this time that I presented my scientific poster on the subject of elites at the conference of the Volkswagen Stiftung *'Re-Thinking Social Inequality'* in 2014. I received useful comments from various members of the audience, and my full article was accepted for publication. Among all the valuable insights, what I remember most vividly is a

[3] Keller (1979, p. 19) lists the unanswered basic questions in elite study. They are as follows: Do the elites really exist and if so, who belongs to them? How many elites exist within a given society at the time? What is the nature of the relationship between elites and classes? What determined the prevalent patterns of selections of elites? How many elites are there in this period and why? To note, Keller herself did not provide any satisfactory answers to the questions she enumerated.

[4] For his entire theory of the circulation of elites, see Pareto Vilfredo (1901:1986) '*The Rise and Fall of Elites: An Application of Theoretical Sociology'*.

conversation with Professor Houben from Humboldt University and Professor Jodhka from Jawaharlal Nehru University who pointed out that almost everyone who presented at the conference placed their focus of study on socio-economic differences in a given society, and especially the issue of poverty. They told me that it is important to conceptually differentiate between social inequality and economic disparity, especially because they are increasingly intertwined and therefore confused in today's study field of social inequality. Keeping this teaching in mind, I went one step back to study concepts, which are often used interchangeably, for instance, social inequality and economic disparity, social integration and social inclusion, and so on. At this time, I thought this inquiry was important for studying the topic of elite especially when I think of the relationship between structures of inequality: meritocratic elite and class structure. Actually, I think inquiring about the relationship between social inequality and economic disparity could be situated as a key factor for any kind of social inequality research today.

One of the commonly used ways of conceptualising social inequality and economic disparity can be found in the latest field of social stratification study. *The latent class analysis* of Savage et al. (2013) in U.K., Kondo (2010, 2011)'s *Geometric Social Space Analysis* in the framework of the Social Stratification and Mobility (SSM) survey in Japan, and *the milieu analysis* of the SINUS institute in Germany are major examples from this field of study. Giving a concrete example, Japanese sociologist Shirahase Sawako (2014), who is a leading figure in the SSM survey in Japan, explains differences between social inequality and economic disparity in terms of sentiment when they are used. She explains that inequality is an "outward manifestation of an unfair valuation of a difference", which "no amount of 'effort' or 'ability' can alter", because it is historically constituted. In this sense, its political justification arouses one's "sense of unreasonable wrong". On the other hand, disparity means "a gap in an ordered rating", designating the measurability of differences. Therefore, there does not arise a feeling of injustice when one hears that the disparity is getting bigger or that the disparity is inevitable. Accordingly, social exclusion is a systematic exclusion of a certain group of people, who suffer from an unequal valuation of differences as a group category, from participation in the ordered rating.

The scholars of social stratification reject conceptualising social class as being solely economic, given the well-known criticism of Marxist theory, and understand it as being a multidimensional construct that is profoundly cultural and social. Bourdieu's way of framing social class and lifestyle, mediated by the concept of habitus, has influenced this manner of

framing social class. This field of study largely contributed to demonstrate the on-going situation of social stratification in contemporary society worldwide, despite the popular discourse of the expansion of the global middle class and a homogenising trend via modernisation, globalisation and neo-liberalisation.[5] Nevertheless, they do not say much about the relationship between the structure of social inequality and economic disparity.

In my view, the common use of analysis of socio-economic factors tends to lead scholars of social stratification to employ socio-economic data, such as education level, job types and parental occupations, of individuals as an indicator of social classes and then later connect each class to their lifestyle or *vice versa*. Ultimately, there is a great risk in merely measuring economic differences between various groups of people in a society: social classes, male and female, white-collar workers and blue-collar workers, urban and rural residents and so on. Methodologically speaking, the application of socio-economic measurement necessarily leads us to observe economic differences between different social groups of people. This is necessary because the result is designated by the episteme embodied in the methodological concept of *socio-economy*. Indeed, the neatly distinguished concepts of social inequality and economic disparity get jumbled up as soon as they are applied to empirical studies due to the epistemological necessity at the methodological level. In other words, such study results do not elucidate, but rather assume, the nature of the relationship between social inequality and economic disparity. Bounded by the aforementioned epistemological framework, the field of social stratification study often takes the improvement of individuals' living standard as a sign of increasing social mobility. In this theoretical framework, the proliferation of educational opportunities is situated as a key factor to augment life chances of individuals. This also fits very well to the social reality. For example, in countries that are emerging economies, the emergence of the new middle class is seen as the predestined result of an accumulation of cultural capital through education,[6] and in advanced industrialised countries investment in children's education is seen as a key

[5] The number of people who consider themselves as members of the middle class is rapidly growing in the countries of emerging countries economies such as in China, India, Turkey and Brazil. In an article in *the Wall Street Journal* in 2013, Francis Fukuyama took up the statistics that "the estimated size of the global middle class by 2030" will be 4.9 billion "up from 1.8 billion in 2009, according to the European Union".

[6] The expansion of the labour force in the IT sector is taken as a case in Sridharan (2011). The members of the new middle class are characterised by possession of academic degrees and employment in the emerging sector in India. See also Baviskar and Ray (2011).

strategy for members of the middle class to reproduce their socio-economic positions.[7] Simply put, the positive causal relationship between proliferation of educational opportunity and augmentation of upward social mobility level is rendered indisputable.

In concert with Bourdieu's insight on reproduction of social inequality as economic disparity via meritocracy, I suspected that the role of education and the idea of equality of opportunity might be taken for granted in the field of social stratification study. On this basis, my study came to grasp the social phenomena of social inequality and economic disparity as necessarily having something to do with each other, given the monist character of social reality while, at the same time, being fundamentally different. However, how social inequality and economic disparity intertwine in the actual social reality must be studied theoretically as well as empirically. Bringing our attention back to my study topic, I dropped the first research topic of elites. This is because tackling the question of elites requires me to have intensive knowledge regarding economic disparity, social inequality and social exclusion and, their relationships to one another. Clearly, I did not possess such advanced insights at that point. Instead, I chose to focus my study on answering a more fundamental and simpler, but no less important, question namely the mechanism of the perpetuation of social hierarchy of the past in relation to economic disparity, both theoretically and empirically, using the case of a post-industrial country, Japan. In this sense, this doctoral research is my very first step to elucidating the nature of social inequalities in contemporary societies.

1.2. Summary of thesis

I start my inquiry from a theoretical endeavour to establish the legally framed nature of social inequality in the neo-liberal capitalist societies at the theoretical level. What is immediately noticeable in this endeavour is that the definition of neo-liberalism is still disputed, even though its benchmark may be located in the 1970s. Political scientists tend to find themselves in the intellectual historical current of institutionalism identifying neo-liberalisation with a set of policies, for instance, of financial deregulation and privatisation. This notion of neo-liberalisation, which is seen as a global proliferation of neoliberal policies, has produced an impression of a homogenising trend in social realities worldwide. However, recent critical

[7] Lamont (2012, p. 202) wrote that middle class parents "appear to be ever more eager to prepare their children for a world of increased competition", and therefore investment in education is essential for reproduction of their class positions.

research has pointed out that such an assumption is empirically and theoretically false. In the field of political economy, for instance, Boyer (2005) examined the existing literatures on the diversity of models of capitalisms, and concluded that there is no theoretical implication on "a force brings about homogenising effect of capitalisms". Taking this point further, Thelen (2012) argues that the neo-liberalisation of different models of capitalism necessarily results in different social arrangements, because the impact of so-called neoliberal policies on different capitalist societies, whose institutional arrangements are heterogeneous due to their historicity, must be diverse in terms of both space and time. Lechevalier (2007 and 2012) provides us an empirical case study from Japan, which support these arguments.

As a necessary counterpart of this institutional analysis in the field of political economy, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu have taught us to identify neo-liberalisation with the reinterpreted *self* in the dynamism in the overall discourse of state governance. Following this line, I identify the idea of the *self* in today's central egalitarian principle, namely *Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO)*, whereby "equally talented people have an equal chance to attain social positions". This idea, suggested by John Rawls (1921-2002) in 1971, has been used to justify a range of integrative social policies even until today. In the case of Japan, its political impact became noticeable from 2009 onwards.[8] In my view, this change was critical and remains so for the study field of social inequality because the institutionalisation of this new egalitarian principle worldwide necessarily interlocks with a transformation in the very nature of social inequality in different societies, and results in neo-liberalisation in all relevant political issues.[9] One of the essential points of Rawls' ideas for the study field of social inequality is that he argues that individual socio-economic differences are a result of fair social competitions and should be considered as just in the field of politics. In my study, meritocracy indicates a principle of distribution of socio-economic positions on the ground of achievement in terms of merit as a direct expression of one's natural attributes such as diligence and/or talent. Integrative policies aim at including everyone in a given society in this fair meritocratic competition. In this manner, no one is excluded from attaining educational opportunity by law. On this basis, socio-economic differences have become considered politically justifiable; this is what Rawls calls *pure*

[8] Fukuma (2014) summarises the Japanese trends in the reception of Rawls' ideas, noting that research developed gradually in the twentieth century, and started to flourish only in the early twenty-first century, achieving its political impact from 2009 onwards.

[9] I believe this shift remains critical because Rawls has defended the relevance of his conception of *"justice as fairness"* in policy making. See Rawls (1985, 1997 and 2001)

procedural justice. Indeed, by virtue of inclusive competition, a new type of inequality, one that is considered politically justifiable on the basis of a belief in individual achievement and merit, has emerged.

The Rawlsian principle of justice becomes ideological in practice precisely because philosophers of justice tend to fail to ask one question: How can a given principle of justice be legally framed and implemented in a given society.[10] My theoretical observation of egalitarian principles suggests that FEO, hand in hand with meritocracy, functions in practice as a translator of individuals' innate socio-cultural characteristics to different socioeconomic levels over time. Existing research in the field of social stratification study supports this observation, showing the tendency that those who have disadvantaged origins will also be disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic achievements. Furthermore, in concert with Foucault's teaching, I argue that governance with this idea of *self* exercises disciplinary power over people. While living one's life, individuals internalise the idea of self, which Taylor (1989) calls the *punctual self*, to construct the ideological discourse of every life in capitalist society: *symbolic liberalism.* Within this discourse, people enact their actions without reflecting upon the historically constituted structure of social inequality, and misrecognise each other as being equal and free. In summary, the inbuilt mechanism of FEO suggests that the perpetuation of social hierarchy of the past is symbolically mediated in contemporary society.

In chapter 3: Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Inequality I provide readers with my theoretical framework to explain how the perpetuation of social inequality actually occurs, concealed with the logic of equality and freedom. Concretely, I understand the mechanism underlying persisting social inequality in contemporary post-industrial societies in the theoretical framework of *symbolic violence*. Incorporating two historically constituted research paradigms in the field of sociology, institutionalism and subjectivism, into a hermeneutical relationship, Bourdieu argues that the perpetuation of the structure of social inequality in French society is symbolically mediated. Being born in and growing up in a fundamentally unequal social reality, individuals develop their sense of the realistic limits of possibilities in their lives in accord with their positions in the social hierarchy via *habitus*. In other words, individuals' aspirations are strongly tied to the existing structure of social hierarchy in a given society. However, everyone, including those who are themselves

[10] I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Otto Pfersmann of the EHESS for answering my questions regarding this issue.

dominated, misrecognise this actually unequal condition of existence as being fair. This is to say, individuals enact their practices in everyday life without reflecting upon the existing structure of social hierarchy. Particularly, belief in the idea of equality of opportunity and meritocracy encourage those who are socially included to perceive their actual social positions as being direct results of own competence and effort. In this manner, the benefit of winning and the cost of loss in social competitions are internalised and endured individually as reflected by their amount of talent or effort. As a result, the social hierarchy of the past is unknowingly perpetuated, concealed within the logic of fairness, equality and freedom.

Despite his interest in pointing out the discrepant social reality of social competitions from the one suggested with the idea of FEO, Bourdieu did not discuss the concept of opportunity *per se*. In order to strengthen this point, I draw my operational concept of opportunity from Amartya Sen's *capability approach*. For Sen, equality of opportunity does not say much about egalitarianism if people do not have the freedom to access the necessary resources to realise the life they desire. In other words, an individual is free to do and be as she wishes within the constraints imposed by factors related to her social positions, such as money, time, encouragement, and information. Regrettably, Sen's discussions regarding opportunity are limited to the level of the individual. If an individual's perceptions of the life of which they are capable to achieve are equally socially stratified, as Bourdieu argues with his concept of habitus, people perpetuate social hierarchies precisely by achieving the lives that they value.

Before proceeding to apply this theoretical framework to a case study, the fourth chapter of this thesis examines the applicability of the aforementioned theoretical framework suggested by Bourdieu to the Japanese context. This is necessary due to my choice to study contemporary Japanese society as a counterpoint to the body of work regarding European and American society. Following Bourdieu, my thesis rejects conforming to the universally accepted standard way of practicing science, which has been developed, in fact, in Western scientific fields. The normative way of doing science would require me to find a functional similarity between French and Japanese social institutions in order to apply Bourdieu's theory to a Japanese case. However, this is fundamentally a structuralist formulation of methodology. Consequently, it is not in line with my overall understanding of individual *self* as wilful, rational and strategic, but at the same time not interested in satisfying any universal laws regarding human behaviour. As an alternative way, I will take *reflexivity* of research seriously and talk about *crafting*. Crafting entails operationalising abstract concepts embodied

in research questions according to historically constituted, and therefore locally specific, practical knowledge of everyday life at a specific fieldwork site.

My theoretical work identified two points that need to be tested empirically in a case study based on actual experiences in everyday life. Firstly, I test if it is empirically true that individuals internalise and identify themselves with the modernist idea of the *self,* as I theoretically established in chapter 2. Secondly, I verify if it is empirically true that individuals misrecognise their current social positions as being the direct expressions of their own individual achievements, which I proposed in Chapter 3. These two points, in concert, constitute my central research question: *Is the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO, internalised and used by the "socio-culturally disadvantaged" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality*? Chapter 5 establishes a recent example of the phenomenon of socio-cultural disadvantage in Japan, namely, the disadvantaged status of residents in the countryside. This socio-cultural disadvantage becomes apparent when we examine the meritocratic distribution of the most sought-after social positions in Japan. As it is a disparity resulting from meritocratic fair selections, this socio-cultural disadvantage is not considered as politically problematic by the establishment. The rest of the chapter will show the process of operationalisation of my research question by integrating locally observed *episteme* to theoretically formulated research questions in detail.

Chapter 6 establishes the neo-liberal shift in the governance regarding a recent example of the phenomenon of socio-cultural disadvantage in Japan that is politically justified by the establishment, namely, the disadvantaged status of residents in the countryside. According to the latest study results regarding Japanese modes of governance, the Japanese political process has developed by using the social cleavage between the urban and the rural as a political tool. This is to say that the neo-liberalisation of the governing discourse at the national level expresses itself in the sphere of regional policies, rather than in the sphere of social welfare, as is typically the case in Western capitalist societies. I argue that the shifts in the Japanese governing discourse, including neo-liberalisation, have advanced while simultaneously reinforcing the urban-rural divide. With this in mind, I analysed a large series of policy papers that set forth the overall direction of Japanese regional policies, and identified a modernist idea of *self*, which is my marker in this study of a neo-liberal shift in the governing discourse. Coincidentally, responsibility of political decisions regarding the economic development of any given local community are distributed to the local residents via a form of state-financed grassroots local activism: *community-building projects (CBP)*.

This leads me to determine CBP as a locus where micro and macro phenomenon of neo-liberalism meets; choosing my fieldwork site from among the communities that are taking part in the CBP has the effect of selecting a social space where neo-liberal policy and the existing structures of social inequality within the community converge. Accordingly, I chose one village from the participant communities to the latest example of CBP as my fieldwork site: Kuki, Owase-city. I learned of this village through one of my undergraduate alumni, who has been working as a member of CBP. By the fact that I did not have any preliminary knowledge about this village prior to my fieldwork, I consider my choice of Kuki as a fieldwork site arbitrary. In chapter 7: Socio-Culture of Kuki, I demonstrate the structure of social inequality constructed over history within the village. This is essential, simply because it identifies the structure of social inequality, which is in effect today without applying ready-made social categories. As a result of ethnographic inquiry, I found out that Kuki's social hierarchy is organised according to the length of a given households' residency in the village. This hierarchy among households has been institutionalised in Kuki as various types of membership in a benefit association, which give access to concrete social, economic and political benefits to its members. Referencing these ethnographic findings back to the existing studies of rural communities in Japan, it became apparent that such a social structure is something that it is commonly seen in other communities in the Japanese countryside. What makes Kuki an essential case is that some researchers have mentioned Kuki in their research publications because its degree of consolidation appears so remarkable.

Chapter 8, finally, delivers the answers to my research questions. The historically constituted structure of social inequality has been perpetuated via the CBP in Kuki. On one hand, the socio-culturally powerful individuals in the village are the most active members in the CBP since they are seen as the only ones with competence and motivation. On the other hand, the socially marginalised, who are the newcomers to the village, have hitherto been excluded from the village's community life by being stigmatised as uneducated and unmotivated. However, these unequal social positions among residents are not recognised as discriminatory as they derive directly from the historically constituted structure of social inequality within the village. According to my interview analysis, all my interviewees identify themselves with the modernist idea of the *self*, someone who is free and equal, and has nothing to do with the existing structure of social inequality. On this basis, everyone, including those who are relatively disadvantaged in a lower position in the social hierarchy, understands their current social positions as the direct results of their own achievements, on

the basis of their own merits. In the particular context of CBP, the degree of engagement depends highly on the structure of social hierarchy, however, differences in the degree of engagement among people are misrecognised as being expressions of motivation and interest. These results provide an affirmative answer to my overall research question and, hermeneutically, to my theoretical discussion. In short, my empirical study shows that both the powerful and the marginalised at my fieldwork site justify their socio-economic positions as being what they deserve when they reflect on their supposed amounts of talent and effort. This is precisely the mechanism that Bourdieu explained with the theory of *symbolic violence*. Under this mechanism, the existing structure of social inequality is misrecognised, justified and perpetuated. It is important to note, however, that it is necessary to conduct many more empirical studies in order to generalise this result from Kuki to the rest of Japan. Strictly speaking, the explanatory capacity of my theoretical framework was confirmed empirically only in Kuki; in order to generalise it to other area of Japan, it is necessary to widen the scope of empirical studies. To close my study, I situate my fieldwork site in the context of the state governance in Chapter 9. I conclude this study with my argument that the adjustment of social space in accord with neo-liberal governance advances while maintaining the structure of social inequality of the past.

1.3. Scientific contribution

My research is intended to contribute to the field of research in four ways. Firstly, as the application of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence to the Japanese case has remained limited, this research contributes to a body of studies that apply Bourdieu's approach and theory outside the French cultural context. Secondly, by empirically demonstrating that the inbuilt mechanism of FEO, which results in persisting social inequality, my research contributes to deconstructing one central assumption in the field of social inequality study, *i.e.* that achievement of equality of opportunity will results in the equal distribution of socially valued resources in a society. Further, it encourages the possibility of future research focusing on the mechanism of perpetuation of social inequality concealed with the logic of freedom and equality via the very egalitarian principle. Thirdly, this research contributes to the field of social inequality study at a meta-theoretical level by showing the relevance of Bourdieu's theory to Japanese society. Bourdieu once wrote that he wished his readers to read his major works as exercise books. It has a strong theoretical implication. The characteristics of social inequality in a given society are necessarily historically specific and therefore

heterogeneous; however, the mechanism of justification of social inequality can be identical in different societies. This study shows the plausibility of this implication by providing a case from Kuki, Japan. Finally, my work will contribute to the interdisciplinary field of social study by providing an example of producing relevant knowledge regarding social inequality in Japan. To add, I have tried to make my work as innovative as possible. In this effort, my work includes many concepts, which are still developing in the cutting-edge research –*socio-culture, symbolic liberalism, crafting, peripheralisation* and so on. It may interest the students not only from the field of social inequality study, but also Bourdieu's study, Japanese study, Asian studies or Area studies in general, rural study, public policy study and/or legal studies.

Chapter 2.
Modernist Idea of Self and its Implication on Social Inequality:
Theoretical consideration on egalitarian principles

2.1. Introduction

My point of departure in this research is the need to clarify the legally framed characteristics of social inequality in contemporary neo-liberal capitalist societies at the theoretical level. It requires a careful examination of the egalitarian principle, which is in use in today's society. This is certainly because the definition of *neo-liberalism* is still disputed even though its benchmark is found in 1970s. This irresolution arises from the effort to underpin neo-liberalism with its static components and a set of policies. Different fields of social science has long endeavoured to establish functional definitions of neo-liberalism and, constructed tautological paradigms regarding neo-liberalism and functions of its economic, political and social institutions. However, from this structuralist perspective, neo-liberal institutional arrangements in different nation-states have appeared so diverse that it rendered impossible for the various fields of social science to come to an agreement on its common identification. It is only recently that scholars of societies, worldwide, came to teach to treat neo-liberalisation not as a mere change in the characteristics in capitalism marked with policies of deregulation and privatisation as economists have defined; but rather, in relation to the transformation of a given society as a whole.

Regarding this point, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) explained to capture a political shift with the reinterpretation of the *self* in the overall discourse of state governance. Neo-liberalisation, for instance, is marked with the similar reformulation of *self,* embodied in the governance in the different nation-state. In a sense that the institutional arrangements of capitalism in different societies are heterogeneous, the social reality in a neo-liberal capitalist society given rise with the reinterpreted *self* differs from country to country, but sharing the same dynamics. In this manner, his approach allows us to grasp neo-liberalisation with its overarching dynamism beyond different models of capitalism. Focusing more on the issue of social inequality, this Foucault's idea suggests that a shift of the concept of *self* in the egalitarian principle embodied in state governance necessarily designates to a change in the nature of social inequality in a given society. Following this line of thinking, I will devote this chapter to inquire the nature of social inequality in the contemporary neo-liberal capitalist

societies. For this purpose, this chapter, at first, introduces the Modernist idea of self, marked with a process of rationalisation through reinterpretation of *time* as a sequence of independent moments. Then, I will ground this idea of self in the egalitarian principle, which is widely used in today's society and establish its implication to the nature of social inequality. I will argue that the neo-liberal egalitarian principle, namely *Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO),* in itself, results in perpetuating the existing structure of social inequality in a given society. Taking this theoretical observation as the starting point, I develop my argument: the mechanism of perpetuation of social inequality via FEO is rendered, in fact, invisible in a capitalist discourse of social reality *i.e. symbolic liberalism.* Within symbolic liberalism, individuals are disciplined to regard themselves as free and equal, and on this basis their social positions as it being a direct expression of one's competence. In this manner, the results of social competitions, which are influenced by the existing structure of social inequality, are ascribed to one's competence. Hermeneutically speaking, the mechanism of perpetuating social inequality in the contemporary society is concealed with the logic of equality and freedom via the very egalitarian principle.

2.2. Modernist idea of self

The Modernists, who see time-efficiency as the indicator of progress, endeavoured to achieve the goal of finding the eternal truths, whose discovery is the ultimate way of saving further time to be spent on a given issue. For this Modernist truth to remain "true", it must stand infinite time and must be applicable for every individual in every given instant moment. In other words, reaching this goal required to overcome the complexity and the contingency of life, which necessarily derives from individuals' heterogeneity in terms of their socio-cultural and socio-economic characteristics. This led the Modernists to re-conceptualise *time* as an accumulation of discontinuous moments and managed to conceptually separate individuals from their socio-cultural context. In Bauman's term, the Modernist tried to reach the truth not by "promoting the study and acquisition of the missing skills (to study the contingency and the complexity of life), but through making their possession (of the sources of such complexity and contingency) irrelevant, indeed unnecessary."[11] Simply put, the Modernist self is disengaged from its historicity and socio-cultural context; on this ground, the

[11] Quoted from Bauman (2000, p. 102)

Modernist idea of self is "empty".[12] For the sociologists who take time component of human actions seriously, such presumptions suggest that one can neither situate herself in the narrative of history nor make the past relevant for the present decision for future; it is impossible for individuals to make sense out of anything.[13] Furthermore, Taylor (1989) explains, the alternative way of interpreting human actions, suggested by the Modernists, was underpinned with the logic of rational thinking. In other words, the Modernist concept of self is disregards how human being actually acts in social reality.

In a sense that the contingency of life world is rendered irrelevant, this concept of *self* enabled the field of politics to separate the politically problematic situations from its historical narratives. In this way, the act of dealing with political issues can be handled as simple trouble shootings. To increase the efficiency in this process of troubleshooting, a tendency to push decision making to more time-efficient system of capitalism such as "unregulated" market[14], the private sector and the realm of self-responsibility, which underpinned with the logic of rationality has emerged. According to Baumann (2000) and Rosa (2003), this dispatch of decision-making process to more time efficient system is the phenomenon to identify as neo-liberalisation. Despite of the fact that many sociologists have already criticised such Modernist projects, the idea of Modernist self has been institutionalised in the field of politics and still constitutes the governing discourse in today's society. In concert with Foucault's concept of *governmentality,* this imposition of an empty concept of *self* suggests the discrepancy between the actual social reality and the perceived social reality in the field of politics. Bringing our attention to the specific issue of social inequality, I argue that identifying this Modernist idea of self in the egalitarian principle, which is currently in effect, is essential for the purpose of understanding the nature of social inequality in the contemporary society. This is simply because, by definition, an egalitarian principle designates, an idea of equality and fairness, and conversely it designates which kind of inequality is to be (un)justifiable in a given society.[15] This means a reinterpretation of the idea of *self*, embodied in egalitarian principles in a given society interlocks with the way we

[12] This is Rehbein and Souza (2014, p. 24)'s term.
[13] To give a few examples, Ricoeur (1980) argues that our way of experiencing time and the ability to follow and tell a story is dependent on each other. With the concept of genealogy, Foucault showed that our perceptions of realities have been constructed over time. For Bourdieu, time is essential in order to understand human actions as meaningful and strategic practices.
[14] I use brackets here because so-called free market in reality is, in fact, highly regulated.
[15] Segall (2013, p. 19) writes that what is important is an attempt of justification is made, not so much as it is ultimately successful. A justification is to provide a reason why advantages and disadvantages should be nullified. The justification might show that social inequality is just and justified.

experience social inequality. The successful identification of the modernist idea of *self* leads me to conclude that there is a discrepancy between the actual practice and the perceived reality of social inequality in the political field.

2.3. Egalitarian principles

I will start this inquiry with an introduction of different egalitarian principles. This is because it is often the case to find confusion between different egalitarian principles –*equality of outcome, equality of opportunity,* and *equality of fair opportunity,* especially in the general discourse in media but even sometimes in the field of social science. One of the typical confusions is marked with an assumption that the proliferation of equality of opportunity will lead to more egalitarian society in terms of achieving similar level of living standard among the socially included.[16] Theoretically speaking, this is a false assumption.

The fundamental differences between *equality of outcome* and *equality of opportunity* is the context, in which these ideas become meaningful regarding fairness. Their difference becomes clear when we consider the difference between "to have A" and "to have an opportunity for A"[17] under both principles. In the case of equality of outcome, there is no difference between the two. Fairness of equality of outcome concerns the equal distribution of socially valued goods[18], which are available for everyone who desires them. Fairness of equality of opportunity, on the other hand, concerns the terms of competition; equality of opportunity as a principle is only meaningful in the context of distributing socially valued goods, which are not in sufficient supply for everyone who desires them. This is to say that the idea of equality of opportunity necessarily designates competition between individuals in a given society. In other words, there will necessarily be inequality of outcome and it is considered justifiable in a society with the egalitarian principle of equality of opportunity.[19] On this ground, the principle underlying equality of opportunity requires that chances to

[16] This is indeed a common false assumption in Japanese field of social inequality study. To give a concrete example, Shirahase (2010, p. 200) writes that the origin of the accumulation of inequality of outcome is differences in life chances, and thus, the dissolution of inequality of opportunity will lead to equality of outcome. For other works with such an assumption, see Mimizuka and Maekawa (2015), Shirahase (2010, 2014) and Fukuhara (2007).

[17] The inquiry into the difference between the two was suggested in Sreenivasan (2014, p. 83)

[18] I use the term socially valued goods in order to avoid giving an impression that I consider the distributive justice in terms of resources, which is fundamentally utilitarian idea. By socially valued goods, I mean goods that its possession expresses one's social value in terms of Bourdieu's idea of cultural, economic, social and symbolic capital.

[19] The entry of equality of opportunity starts with the life: "Equality of opportunity is a political ideal that is opposed to caste hierarchy but not to hierarchy *per se*". See *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (accessed on 9th November 2015).

acquire a given socially valued goods are formally equally available to everyone in a given society at any point of time.[20]

The formal principle of equality of opportunity does not specify who is considered to be a part of members of society. It implies that it can function together with the systematic exclusion of one or more specific groups of people from the acquisition of such chances. According to Rawls (1985, p. 230), this conventional intellectual endeavour in political philosophy to pursue eternally true just society is metaphysical, or more simply put, not practical. This proposition motivated Rawls to deliberate how to distribute socially valued goods, which are not in sufficient supply for everyone, in a justifiable manner *i.e.* distributive justice, in the specific political context of liberal democracy. The process of inclusion through equality of opportunity may be still seen to require considerable effort to bring it to fruition, when we reflect upon the on-going situations of gender inequality, racism, and discrimination against sexual minorities, among other examples of inequality of opportunity. This perception owes its foundation to the political ideal of liberal democracy, which promises all the member of society to be treated as free and equal. In other words, it is since Rawls that the systematic exclusion of groups of people from the scope of equality of opportunity: inequality of opportunity became to be seen as an unacceptable type of social inequality in the field of political philosophy.

In order to include everyone in a given nation-state with liberal democracy to the scope of equality of opportunity, John Rawls reinterpreted the idea of *equality of opportunity* as *equality of fair opportunity (FEO)* whereby "equally talented people have an equal chance to attain social positions" in his influential book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971:1999).[21] The principle underlies this idea is that the equally talented individuals with the same level of aspiration have an equal chance to attain socially valued goods.[22] *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* introduces FEO as a type of substantive equality of opportunity. It is substantive in a sense that it is applied to actual societies via various integrative policies worldwide. Indeed, Rawls formulated the idea of FEO as a tool of political reasoning and, political scientists have endeavoured to formulate egalitarian integrative social policies based on his idea.[23] As a result, social competitions have become increasingly inclusive since

[20] This definition may be found in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equal-opportunity/ (accessed on 9th November 2015).
[21] This definition is given in Sachs (2012).
[22] This definition is given in Rawls (1971:1999) and Sachs (2012).
[23] See Rawls (1997)

1970s. The degree of political implementation of Rawlsian theory of justice differs from countries to countries. For the particular case of Japan, the noticeable change occurred when the Democratic Party Japan won the general election in 2009. However, this is not yet the stage to look into the detail changes in Japanese political sphere.[24] First, we need to identify the nature of Rawlsian theory of justice at the theoretical level.

2.3.1. Modernisation of egalitarian principle

In this section, I proceed to identify the Modernist idea of self in FEO. More precisely, I will endeavour to identify, firstly, the rejection of individuals' socio-cultural contexts from the understanding of human being, and secondly the removal of the time aspect of human social practices. The successful establishment of the Modernist idea of self in FEO leads me to argue that institutionalisation of FEO gives rise to the discrepancy between its actual practice and its perceived reality.

In Rawls' writing, Modernist characteristics are most apparent in his concept of *self,* constituted in *original position* and *veil of ignorance*, which are his essential conceptual tools to envision a fair society. By the concept of original position, Rawls (1971: 1999, p. 16) appoints "the most philosophically favoured interpretation" of the initial position for the purpose of reflection on the idea of egalitarian justice. When individuals are in the original position, he explains, they are supposed to be unaware of their socio-cultural characteristics; their socio-cultural characteristics are supposed to be concealed with a mysterious veil of ignorance. Rawls (1971: 1999, p. 118) depicts individuals in the original position as follows:

> First of all, no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status; nor does he know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence and strength, and the like. Nor, again, does anyone know his conception of the good, the particulars of his rational plan of life, or even the special features of his psychology such as his aversion to risk or liability to optimism or pessimism. More again this, I assume that the parties do not know its economic or political situation, or the level of civilisation and culture it has been able to achieve.

The only information they possess about them is "whatever general facts affect the choice of the principles of justice" such as general facts about human society, economic theories and so on.[25] A rational person, by definition, aims at advancing her own preferences and interests, thus, none should possess knowledge about their socio-cultural and socio-economic details in order to make a valid decision, applicable for everyone else; the socio-cultural and socio-

[24] Fukuma (2014) concludes his work by pointing out this change. I will analyse how the relevant changes occurred in Japanese political sphere in detail in Chapter 6.
[25] Quoted from Rawls (1971:1999, p. 119)

economic information of individuals make their decisions biased according to their self-interest. Rawls argues that individuals in the original position are forced to treat everyone equally and fairly, because there is a possibility that a given decision, which advantages only a certain group of people, could disadvantage the decision makers themselves when the removal of veil of ignorance reveals that they, actually, belong to a disadvantaged group.[26] In short, rational thinking with no bias is a key to bring everyone to make the singular choice *i.e.* rational choice. The process of disengagement of individuals from social contingency through the deprivation of socio-cultural characteristics of individuals for the sake of rationality is, hereby, apparent.

In the concept of original position, we can also observe the removal of time aspect from human practice. Rawls specifically writes that a person in the original position does not know her "level of civilisation or culture" and "the generation to belong to".[27] This clearly shows that Rawls rejects the relevance of such historical contexts of a given situation or individuals' past experiences to the foundation of rationality:

> The mere difference of location in time, of something's being earlier or later, is not in itself a rational ground for having more or less regard for it. (…) There is no reason for the parties to give any weight to mere position in time. (1971:1999, p. 259)

In Rawls' view, rational choices are by definition should be made from the perspective, which will be fair for all the generations at any point of time. Solely in this manner, the decision will be consistent for the infinite period of time. In other words, the eternal truth regarding fairness will be achieved at the cost of individuals' historicity.

This rationally reached idea of fairness lays the foundation of FEO. FEO is a principle, which stipulates the fair distribution of the limited number of socially valued goods in a society. Rawls considers that if the process of social distribution is just, the result of distribution should be also considered to be just – *pure procedural justice*. According to Rawls, FEO contributes to treating everyone, all assumed to be equal at the original position, fairly in the process of distributing socially valued goods and, more importantly, it saves time:

> The practical advantage of pure procedural justice is that it is no longer necessary to keep track of the endless variety of circumstances and the changing relative positions of particular persons. One avoids the problem of defining principle to cope with the enormous complexities which would arise if such details were relevant. It is a mistake to focus on the varying relative positions of individuals, and to require that every change, considered as a single transaction viewed in isolation, be in itself, just. (…) (T)he acceptance of the two principles (that is firstly to treat the question of distributive shares as a matter of procedural

[26] Rawls (1971:1999, p. 17) thinks it is "reasonable to suppose that the parties in the original position is equal".
[27] Quoted from Rawls (1971:1999, p. 254)

> justice and secondly, to use FEO as the system of procedural justice) constitutes an understanding to discard as irrelevant as a matter of social justice much of the information and many of the complications of everyday life. (Rawls 1971:1999, p. 76)

Rawls is fully aware of the existence of the complexity in the actual life, which derives from the socio-cultural contexts and, of the contingencies, which would arise over time; however, he simply dismisses them as irrelevant. Given the rationalisation, achieved with deprivation of individuals' socio-cultural characteristics and historicity, the idea of *self*, presented via FEO, is clearly a Modernist one. Implementation of the idea of FEO to legitimise integrative social policies into the field of politics since the 1970s can be seen as the institutionalisation of this Modernist idea of *self* in the field of justice regarding equality and inequality.[28]

2.3.2. The mechanism of fair selection resulting in persisting inequality

By promising everyone an opportunity to be a part of social competitions, FEO is supposed to increase social mobility, and to deconstruct the social hierarchies of the past. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that structures of social inequality persist over time within an individual's lifetime and also over generations on the basis of fair competition.[29] This is because an individual's socio-cultural and historical context actually matters in the realm of everyday life. This is to say that FEO does not, by itself, contribute to deconstructing the historically constituted social hierarchy in practice. On the contrary, FEO embodies a mechanism that results in persisting social inequality. This is precisely because FEO disregards the practical knowledge of how human beings actually experience time in everyday life as well as the social reality shaped by the existing structure of social inequality. This section explains how the mechanism of fair selection results in persisting social inequality in practice even at the theoretical level.

The legal philosopher Benjamin Sachs (2012, p. 323) demonstrates that two variables, which he refers to as *currency* and *timing,* are essential in order to ask valid questions about fairness in his theoretical discussion over egalitarian principles. Furthermore, he points out that FEO lacks any specifications regarding these two variables. Firstly, what Sachs calls currency indicates variable A in "having an opportunity for A."[30] Sreenivasan (2014, p. 83)

[28] Sachs (2012, p. 324) explains, "the principle of fair equality of opportunity encompasses the principle of careers open to talents, which itself justifies social policies such as antidiscrimination laws." In his essay, he is more concerned with the sort of FEO that goes beyond the opportunity of a career.
[29] See Bourdieu (1986), Baviskar and Ray (2011) and Rehbein and Souza (2014)
[30] Agreeing with Arneson, Sachs (2012, p. 325) defines opportunity as "a chance of getting a good if one seeks it." Also See Sachs (2012, p. 326)

wrote "contemporary discussion of distributive justice often distinguish the question '*what* to distribute?' from the question '*how* to distribute?'" The question of "what to distribute" is, following Cohen (1969: in Sachs 2012), generally called the currency question. This is important question because the possession of a certain goods such as education, health care and/or social welfare greatly affects the conditions for individuals who take part in social competitions.[31] Secondly, but no less importantly, there is the timing variable that asks a question "*when* to distribute?" Unfortunately, the timing issue has attracted much less attention in the field of justice study compared to the currency issue. Accordingly, in the discussion of currency issues, equality of opportunity has been primarily considered as a static principle.[32] For instance, it is common for scholars of social justice to make an analogy of a game for a competition for socio-economic success in one's life – variously the starting gate of a race, a playing field, or a lottery. The gate analogy considers that the prospect of winning should be equal for all at the beginning of game; the playing field analogy regards that the conditions for the players must be the same in order for them to have the same prospect of winning, and the lottery analogy holds that it is not fair that a player wins the game only because she was born lucky, given the fact that the talents and initial socio-economic conditions of the players are naturally different.

Here, it is not our task to determine how to achieve fair terms for competition, but to establish the mechanism how all these efforts to achieve fair terms of competition become unrealistic in practice, due to a lack of specificity in timing. In the game analogy, an opportunity to succeed is considered as a *resource*, which should be distributed equally among the players.[33] However, these approaches tend to ignore the dynamism that social competition introduces in practice. McKerlie (1989) was one of the early critics of distributive justice from the standpoint of temporality. He was puzzled with the dismissal of time aspect as a significant factor of justice by the other scholars due to his confidence in its importance:

> It is not clear that those writers really do think that no fact about timing can have any kind of moral importance. They discuss particular ways of making time important. Sidgwick says that the consciousness of one moment is not more important than the consciousness of any other moment. Rawls says that in making decisions about our own lives, or other people's lives, we should not be influenced by a pure time preference which gives more

[31] The leading scholars of this field are, for example, Richard Arneson (1945-) and John Roemer (1945-) among many others.
[32] Freiman (2013, p. 224) points out this point.
[33] Sachs (2012, p. 331) introduced Ronald Dworkin's criticism (2000: in Sachs 2012), which pointed out that the understanding of opportunity as a type of resources indicates the fact that a given approach assumes equality of opportunity as a static principle. Sen (2010) agrees on this point.

> weight to the near future than the distant future. (…) Our lives are lived serially through time, and the simultaneous segments view responds to this fact by valuing equality in the simultaneous parts of lives rather than by merely requiring that lives should be equal when viewed timelessly as completed wholes (1989, pp. 490-491)

As is noticeable in the analogy of life as a game, equality of opportunity indicates that the sum of distributed opportunities for socially valued goods within one lifetime must be equal between individuals. This perspective is called the *complete lives view*. The complete lives view sees that it is just to distribute the same amount of socially valued resources in total by the end of one's life. To give an extreme example, equality is achieved between person A, who at the age of 25 receives one thousand dollars at one time and nothing more for the rest of her life, person B who receives the same amount of money on the last day of her life, and person C who receives a total of one thousand dollars cumulatively throughout her life. The critics of the complete lives view argue that it is necessity to specify alternative time spans than a complete lifetime in order to realise just equal distribution in practice.[34] For instance, McKerlie (1989) argued that the distribution of resources must be equal between individuals within each segment of life – *the life segment view.* Though he did not suggest how to achieve just distribution of resources within individuals' life segments, his argument is meaningful for our purpose; he recognises the significance of the timing of equality of opportunity in practice.

Advancing this point, Shirahase (2010, p. 200) and Freiman (2013) recognise two derivative aspects of FEO.[35] They are concerned with two dynamisms regarding social inequality, which emerge overtime. The first is social inequality that persists over generations. In the section 44: *the Problem of Justice between Generations* (1971:1999, p. 251- 258), Rawls formulates different generations as if they exist in isolation, and they have been compared as being timeless units, completely and wholly. Rawls did not discuss how to cut off the continuity between generations in practice; he simply dismissed it from among the relevant factors of equality.[36] However, generations do not exist in such a way in reality; parents do invest in their children's education, and people inherit family members' property. In addition, the field of social stratification study also shows that a result of social

[34] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy suggests Sikora (1989) as another critic of complete lives view: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equality/#ConDisEquEquWha.

[35] Freiman argues that the principle of Equality of Opportunity is fundamental and the principle of FEO is derivative. He emphasises "those made worse off relative to others by inequalities in starting gates, playing fields, and lotteries are necessarily made worse off absolutely".

[36] To note, Rawls (1971:1999, p. 16) claims that "no one should advantaged or disadvantaged by natural fortune or social circumstances in the choice of principles" because the specific involuntarily attributes of individuals do not render them responsibility. Nevertheless, his discussion of continuity of social inequality over generation remained premature.

competitions of parents interlocks with their children's successes or failures in social competitions from the beginning of their lives in terms of the socio-economic and socio-cultural environment.[37] Accordingly, specifying the timing for obtaining equality of opportunity contributes to preventing social systems from maintaining social inequality caused by all kind of "accident of birth" *e.g.* innate illness, social background and social class, over generations.[38] Conversely put, FEO does not have a mechanism to prevent "accident of birth" from influencing the results of social competitions.

The second issue concerned in timing variable is the accumulation of (dis)advantages within a lifetime due to the fact that a series of social competitions make individuals more and more estranged from the standpoint posited in the original position. One result of a social competition in an earlier segment of life should not influence a result of social competition at the later segment of one's life, because that would mean that social competition becomes increasingly unfair over time.[39] Regardless of this concern, FEO designates that "equally talented people have an equal chance to attain social positions".[40] In the contemporary society, one's amount of talent is measured on the basis of achievement in terms of merit and is certified with academic certificates – meritocracy. On the basis of merit, individuals must prove that they are qualified to have the same prospects of success with other competitors in a social competition for a given socially valued goods. This is to say that, for example, the socially available options for an individual to get a job depend on their educational achievements. It is important to note that the same principle applies to the case of obtaining better academic qualifications. Without specifying the timing of equality, FEO necessarily carries the weight of the earlier results of social competition to the later one via qualifications. This is to say that FEO and meritocracy go hand in hand in contemporary society to make social competitions increasingly unfair over time within a lifetime.

In practice, social competitions become increasingly unfair in a sense that advantages and disadvantages accumulate over time. In addition, only guaranteeing equality of opportunity within a timeless unit of generation does not lead to deconstructing persisting

[37] The social stratification study has shown that the parents' occupational and educational level has effect on children's social position.
[38] This is in Sachs' term (2012).
[39] McKerlie (1989, p. 488) writes: (The complete lives view) treats time as important, but it does not claim that the timing of benefits and harms influences the quality of the individual lives, which contain them.
See also Sachs (2008) *The Liberty Principle and Universal Health Care,* and Sachs (2012) *The Limits of Fair Equality of Opportunity*.
[40] Sachs (2012).

unequal power relationship of the past.[41] These two time-related issues, in an extreme sense, indicate that individuals pursue different levels of accumulation of (dis)advantages starting from their different positions in social hierarchy at birth. Keller (1971) celebrated inclusive competition with the idea of FEO by writing "increasingly people have equal opportunity to achieve unequal statuses". For Keller, the unequal social statuses of individuals are justifiable because it is an expression of diversity, which is a form of freedom. What is missing from her thinking is the fact that individuals are not born in the context-less world; they are born in the existing structure of social inequality. The policies, which justify social competitions with FEO without any specifications of its currency and of its timing, accordingly, embodies the risk of concealing the systematic reproduction of social inequality over time.[42] In this sense, contrary to Rawls' idea of FEO and also the general social belief, the practice of Equality of Opportunity results *in itself* in having an increasing impact on individuals' social backgrounds and on the results of social competitions.

2.4. Implication on our experience of social inequality

The widening socioeconomic gap between individuals as a result of inclusive competitions has recently started to attract wide recognition at national and even global level.[43] However, at the same time, in the emerging social reality of neo-liberalism, socio-economic disparity is politically justified and socially accepted due to a belief in meritocracy with the idea of FEO. Although unequal distribution of wealth, resources and opportunities still remain important aspects of inequality in society, we may remind ourselves that unequal distribution of resources and social inequality are fundamentally different. On one hand, unequal distribution of resources indicates measurable differences among equal individuals; its justification does not provoke a sense of injustice when it coincides with differences in one's achievements.[44] On the other hand, social inequality implies historically constituted qualitative differences between socio-cultural characteristics of people; its justification will be unjust on any

[41] This type of social inequality is the one Bourdieu focuses on. In State Nobility (1996), for instance, he points out that unequal power relations between social classes have been maintained over generations.
[42] He proceeds to show that the idea of FEO results in practice in unequal results of social competitions over time in various fields *e.g.* education, social welfare and medical care. For details of his arguments, see Benjamin Sachs, *The Limits of Fair Equality of Opportunity* (2012).
[43] For this trend, see for instance a recent report on the eighty-five richest people in the world. Oxfam reports that since the 1970s, the rich have acquired increasingly strong influence in the political field, and successfully modified the economic system in favour of their own interests. See http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressrelease/2014-01-20/rigged-rules-mean-economic-growth-increasingly-winner-takes-all-for-rich-elites.
[44] Shirahase (2014)

ground.[45] The complexity arises from the working of FEO to intertwine these two. As we saw previously, FEO without any specificity regarding timing necessarily introduces the weight of "accident of birth" into the results of social competitions, which results in the accumulation of different amount of economic, cultural and symbolic capital. This is to say that meritocracy with the idea of FEO functions as a translator of socio-cultural inequality into socio-economic disparity in practice.

2.4.1. From intentional injustice to symbolic violence

Governance shapes the way we perceive social reality in a concrete manner; this is what Foucault (1977) taught us with the idea of *governmentality*, which explains that the governance indicates not only the management of state, or the establishment of political structure, but also the structuring of possibility of actions of others.[46] In concert, governance underpinned with the logic of rationality structures individuals to perceive themselves in accord with the timeless and contextless selves. While living her life serially through time, an individual experiences governance with FEO via integrative policies and internalise the embodied idea of self in everyday life.[47] Taylor (1989) calls this Modernist idea of self in everyday life, embedded to enhance the necessity of rationality –*punctual self;* those who are touched by the punctual self no longer perceive their life situations according to their experience at hand, but instead, take a stance perceiving themselves as rational agents having equal rights and being free and interpret their experiences accordingly. Rooting their arguments in empirical findings, Rehbein and Souza (2014) further explain that individuals, who have internalised the value of the punctual self, tend to portray themselves as members of the labour force who are "free, autonomous, independent, self-transparent, conscious and in charge of his or her own choices".[48] Further, they call the discourse of everyday life constructed from the eyes of the punctual self, which is shaped in accord with the political structure in the narrative of global capitalism – *symbolic liberalism*. Hermeneutically,

[45] I would like to thank Professor Jodhka and Professor Houben for providing me, in our conversations, with insights regarding the differences between economic disparity and social inequality.

[46] Foucault (1994, p. 341: Davies and Bansel 2007). In the same vein, Chiapello (2015) points out that the public policies shapes "what we can do" and "how we can do it", and thus, a change in the overarching governing discourse affects the possibility of action.

[47] To note, the egalitarian principle of neo-liberalism, namely FEO, is just one component, which construct the ideological discourse. The shift from equality of opportunity to fair equality of opportunity embodies the dynamic of neo-liberalisation and; the symbolic idea of self is embodied in Rawls' concept of the original position. However, it is not unique element, which embodies such dynamics. I chose this particular component, because it is most straightforwardly relevant to justification of social inequality.

[48] For more detailed description, see Rehbein and Souza (2014, p. 25)

symbolic liberalism requires people to regard themselves as having equal right to compete for unequal social status, which leads to different levels of accumulation of wealth to be used to pursue freedom of consumption. What is essential to remember here is that the proliferation of integrative policies with the idea of FEO, which currently does not specify the timing, does not change the existing structure of social inequality. Due to its inbuilt mechanism, FEO does not result in the nullification of the structure of social inequality and; at the same time, the governance with the idea of FEO disciplines individuals to perceive themselves as free and equal. This means that the Modernist egalitarian principle contributes to create a large discrepancy between, in Bauman (2000)'s term, "what-we-do and how-we-narrate-our-actions"; FEO exerts an ideological effect.

Unlike inequality that originates from social exclusion, FEO promises that the opportunity for qualifications is *theoretically* available for everyone. No one is excluded from attaining qualifications by law. This means that it is the applicant herself who achieves the state of not having an opportunity for a given socially valued goods; she is simply under-qualified, which means that she is not competent enough for compete for a given socially valued goods. Rawls specifies that individuals should not be responsible for the disadvantages, which are beyond their control; however, in practice, FEO requires individuals to perceive themselves without socio-cultural differences and to reflect upon their achieved position on the basis of their own amount of competence, effort[49] or talent[50]. In this manner, individuals appear to be responsible for their relative position in a social hierarchy as their own achievement, while the influence of socio-cultural (dis)advantages at birth is rendered invisible. On this ground, I argue that the shift of egalitarian principle from equality of opportunity to FEO interlocks with a paradigm shift in the way how we experience social inequality, from *intentional injustice*, which designates exclusion of one or more groups of people from acquisition of opportunity for socially valued goods on one or more ground, to *symbolic violence*, which designates all inclusive social competition, which results in perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality concealed with the logic of freedom and equality.

This paradigm shift is not yet well recognised in the contemporary discussion of social inequality; the field of study still puts its focus mostly on the distributive disparity

[49] Takeuchi (1995) demonstrates that personal quality of diligence and obedience are seen as indicators of students' competence in Japan.
[50] Such argument is found in France, see Bourdieu (1996).

between different groups of people caused by inequality of opportunity.[51] In fact, recent studies of social inequality dominantly apply their analytical focus on socio-economic factors, especially, *income*. The analysis of income variables of individuals itself necessarily leads us to observe economic disparities among different groups of people within a lifetime. In this sense, by putting an analytical focus on income variables, the study field of social inequality unknowingly reinforces the complete-life view, which we saw in Rawls. Regrettably, the *wealth* variables, which have contributed to maintaining the structure of inequality in a given society, have remained understudied.[52] This academic trend contains a great risk of overlooking the perpetuation of the structure of social inequality over generations, especially in a justified manner via inclusive fair social competitions. It has resulted in diminishing the meaning of social inequality to indicate straightforward economic disparities in some countries.[53] Linking this academic trend to the emerging social reality of neo-liberalism, under which economic disparity is becoming increasingly considered as justifiable via meritocracy, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the social sciences have also contributed to concealing and justifying social inequality under the guise of equality and fair selection.

What is clearly ignored in recent discussions of social inequality is the mechanism, by which equality of opportunity contributes to perpetuating the structure of social hierarchy of the past. In principle, all those who are qualified and compete for a social position enjoy a similar range of socially available options. Examining how equality of opportunity is guaranteed at the point of time of a given selection, therefore, does not take the circumstances of all the unselected, the unqualified and the self-excluded into consideration. Eliminating inequality of opportunity is, indeed, an important political task. However, we should also question the presumption that it is solely inequality of opportunity that produces social inequality, and determine empirically how the idea of equality of opportunity contributes to persisting social inequality. This thesis aims at dismantling the mechanism of equality of opportunity contributing to the perpetuating of the existing social inequality in a small fishing village in Japan. In order to take the time aspect of human life seriously, a case study is essential because the existing structure of social inequality is necessarily locally specific by

[51] This is also my experience at conferences in the field of social inequality study. For example at Harrenhausen Conference of Volkswagenstiftung: Rethinking Social Inequality in 2014, and also at 18th ISA World Congress of Sociology: Facing Unequal World in 2014.

[52] The significance of the wealth variables has been convincingly demonstrated in Piketty (2014) and also Sugimoto (2010)

[53] As an example, I suggest to considering the caste system in India. The social hierarchy of the past transforms itself into economic disparity among individuals in contemporary society in overtly justified manner; see Baviskar and Ray (2011)

the fact that it has been historically constituted. In a sense that the neo-liberal governance conceals such a locally heterogeneous social reality, and imposes a homogeneous view of social reality, the way individuals actually experience the mechanism of FEO must be unique in each case.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter aimed at making the neo-liberal nature of social inequality apparent. First, I identified a particular idea of self in Modernism. Seeing time efficiency as the meaning of progress, the Modernists deprived a time aspect from their concept of human practices. The Modernists achieved this by reinterpreting human being as rational, which, in turn, made the individual heterogeneity in terms of socio-cultural characteristics and historicity irrelevant in the field of politics. As a next step, I identified this Modernist idea of self in the egalitarian principle *–Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO)* in order to make the nature of social inequality in the contemporary society explicit. First of all, on the basis of examination of Rawls' concepts of *original position* and *veil of ignorance,* I made the Modernist idea of self, embodied in the idea of FEO apparent. Taking the timing issue suggested by Mckerlie (1989) and Sachs (2012) as my main focus of critic, I argued that FEO, without specificity of its timing, necessarily brings in the weight of accident of birth to the result of social competitions. On this ground, I argued that FEO does not, *in itself*, result in the nullification of unequal power structure of the past and in the increase in the degree of social mobility as it, in theory, promises. On the contrary, FEO, hand in hand with meritocracy, functions as a translator of individuals' socio-cultural characteristics to different socio-economic level.

I approach the mechanism of FEO that results in the perpetuation of the structure of social inequality of the past concealed within the logic of equality and freedom using the theory of *symbolic violence,* suggested by Pierre Bourdieu. Being different from injustice derives from exclusion of a certain groups of people from having an opportunity; symbolic violence is only possible when individuals are included to social competitions. Through policies, formulated with the idea of FEO, individuals experience the Modernist idea of self and of time in a neo-liberal capitalist society. As Foucault (1975) showed, this experience disciplines individuals to perceive themselves as being equal and free in accord with the Modernist idea of self. These equal and free individuals consist of *symbolic liberalism:* the capitalist discourse of everyday life. In this discourse, everyone is required to reflect their

relative social positions onto their own amount of effort, talent and competence. In this manner, individuals are rendered responsible for his/her results of social competitions. However, remembering the mechanism of FEO, which necessarily brings the weight of accident of birth to the results of social competitions, what people are actually rendered responsible is something, which "beyond one's responsibility". This is to say that politics with FEO without specifying its timing is unjust because it has an effect to justify socio-cultural inequality by making its influence on the results of social competitions for socio-economic positions invisible.

Interlocking with a shift in egalitarian principles, I argue that there was a paradigm shift in the way, in which we experience social inequality. In my view, for the study field of social inequality, this change was critical and remains so because the institutionalisation of this modernist egalitarian principle necessarily interlocks with a transformation in the very nature of social inequality in society, and results in neo-liberalisation in all relevant political issues. Nevertheless, what is clearly ignored in the recent discussion of social inequality is the mechanism of equality of opportunity contributing to perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality. In order to deconstruct this mechanism, it is necessary to engage in a case study. This is because what FEO conceals is the existing structure of social inequality constructed over time, which is specific to a given locality. This means that the way individuals actually experience the mechanism of FEO should be unique in each case, even though the mechanism may be the same in different societies.

Chapter 3.
Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Inequality:

Symbolic violence via equality of opportunity

3.1. Introduction

The French social thinker: Michel Foucault (1926-1984) studied the persisting unequal power relationships in French society from the perspective of the Modernist discipline of self. His insight supports my theoretical observation of FEO; however, he did not explain how it actually works.[54] In order to dismantle how the structure of social inequality is perpetuated via the idea of Fair Equality of Opportunity, this chapter will provide the theoretical framework of my study, suggested by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). I will start this chapter with introducing Bourdieu's view on the idea of equality of opportunity in regard with its temporality to demonstrate that he shares my interest in studying an ideological aspect of equality of opportunity. Departing from this point, I will introduce his overall idea of social inequality underpinned with the theory of *habitus*. On the foundation of habitus theory, he explains the mechanism, by which agents take an active role in justifying the existence of social inequality by misrecognising their own conditions of existence as natural, namely *symbolic violence*. Even though the misrecognition of equality of opportunity plays a vital role in his argument regarding the perpetuation of social inequality via meritocracy, Bourdieu did not talk about the concept of opportunity *per se*. In order to strengthen this point, I will draw arguments from the *capability approach* suggested by Amartya Sen. In the end, integrating the idea of Bourdieu and Sen, this chapter will explain that individuals unknowingly contribute to perpetuate the existing social inequality precisely by doing their best to achieve the life they desire.

3.2. Bourdieu's view on equality of opportunity

In today's field of politics, education is assumed and reasoned to make it possible for anyone to achieve any social position, regardless of his or her social origin. Scholars, who strongly influenced Bourdieu's epistemological and logical framework, such as Karl Marx, Emil Durkheim and Max Weber, were not particularly concerned with the social development

[54] Rehbein and Souza (2014)

toward meritocracy either.[55] Experienced the actual wake of meritocratic society, Pierre Bourdieu was one of the first sociologists to criticise the Modernist political promise and its underlying assumption: proliferation of educational opportunity would directly result in a reduction of social inequality.[56] For instance, in his *State Nobility (1996)*, Bourdieu demonstrates that the chances for an individual to attain academic achievements in France are, in practice, strongly tied to the social class from which he or she originated. Furthermore, such class bias in the process of social selection is not directly apparent to the individual's eyes due to the prevailing and strong social belief in the equality of opportunity. Concretely, he writes that the image of social competitions is constructed in today's society similarly to:

> Roulette, which holds out the opportunity of winning a lot of money in a short space of time, and therefore of changing one's social status quasi-instantaneously, and in which the winning of the previous spin of the wheel can be staked and lost at every new spin, gives a fairly accurate image of this imaginary universe of perfect competition or perfect equality of opportunity, a world without inertia, without accumulation, without hereditary or acquired properties, in which every moment is perfectly independent of the previous one, every soldier has a marshal's baton in his knapsack, and every prize can be attained, instantaneously, by everyone, so that at each moment anyone can become anything (Bourdieu 1986, p. 83)

In this passage, Bourdieu precisely identifies the ideological working of equality of opportunity, given rise with the lack of specificity in its timing. The image of an opportunity, as it being independent from a flow of time, constructs what he calls "the imaginary universe (…) of perfect equality of opportunity." This formulation agrees with what I explained in the previous chapter on *symbolic liberalism*, which is constituted with the Modernist idea of *self,* embodied in the idea of FEO. This imaginary universe of perfect equality of opportunity advocates every members of a society to perceive themselves as having equal rights and being free to access all available options and resources to realise an opportunity for socially valued goods –*e.g.* "marshal's baton" or "prize". In other words, the socio-cultural bias in a given social selection is rendered invisible within this discourse. Bourdieu (1990) argues that the rejection of the existing social hierarchy from our view of human society requires omitting individuals' strategies from the realm of human practices. This would mean to

[55] Especially, Giddens (1971, p. 232) wrote that Durkheim foresaw the period, in which 'access to the leading strata will depend, not upon transmitted privilege, but upon competitive selection of the talented through the medium of the education system' would come. In this formulation, Durkheim seems to situate the two societies in a line of linear development. Also see Swartz (2007) on the influences of the three scholars on Bourdieu's epistemological and logical framework.

[56] For instance, sociology of Durkheim, who strongly influenced Bourdieu's idea, envisioned that the era, in which "access to the leading strata will depend, not upon transmitted privilege, but upon competitive selection of the talented through the medium of the education system" would come. (Durkheim in Giddens, 1971) See also Swartz (1997, p. 190)

reduce meaningful human actions to mere rituals.[57] In this sense, the discourse constructed from such a perspective is, for Bourdieu, necessarily discrepant from social reality, and thus imaginary.

Precisely because of this function of FEO to make unequal power relationships invisible, Bourdieu advances to argue that this envisioned society is not merely imaginary but rather ideological. Accordingly, Bourdieu (1990, p. 133) emphasises the importance of focusing upon elucidating the substantial mechanism of equality of opportunity to perpetuate a social hierarchy, which is naturalised due to its simultaneous ideological effect.

> As I have shown elsewhere, the educational system helps to provide the dominant class with a 'theodicy of its own privilege' not so much through the ideologies it process or inculcates, but rather through the practical justification of the established order that it supplies by masking – under the overt connection that it guarantees, between qualifications and jobs – the relationship, which it surreptitiously records, under cover of formal equality, between the qualifications obtained and inherited cultural capital.

Indeed, one of the significant tasks of sociology for Bourdieu is to uncover the concealed political and social interests embedded in the everyday practices of individuals. In this regard, Bourdieu's approach shares similarities with critical theories that aim at uncovering the locus of domination in modern society via reflections on taken-for-granted social phenomenon, and also at uncovering the hidden assumptions that naturalise given social conditions of human existence.[58]

3.3. Social inequality in the framework of Bourdieu's theory

Before I proceed to introduce Bourdieu's overall idea of social inequality, I must note that there is a difference between Bourdieu's work and my work in terms of our grasp of society. Bourdieu pictured a society as consisting of social spaces of a power struggle. In order to extract a specific logic of domination embedded in a particular segment of society, Bourdieu differentiated various social spaces of a power struggle with his concept of *field e.g.* scientific field, economic field, field of art and so on. This may be a pragmatic solution for Bourdieu's interest of study. However, my study is interested in a social space of everyday life, which cannot be clearly differentiated into different fields as Bourdieu did. For this reason, my study agrees with Rehbein and Souza (2014)'s interpretation of a society: an aggregation of symbolically meaningful practices, which indicates that every practice is tied to power

[57] Bourdieu (1990, p. 106) writes "(T)o abolish the interval is also to abolish strategy….time derives its efficacy from the state of the structure of relations within which it comes into play."
[58] Swartz (1997) and Tormey and Townshend (2006)

structures in a given society via individual's' habitus. Related to this issue, Bourdieu (1990) argues that the pre-capitalist society was not equipped with the necessary conditions to exert symbolic violence in terms of labour and capital due to the fact that the socio-economic position has been hereditary. In other words, Bourdieu argues that the economic field was included in the scope of symbolic domination since the establishment and deepening of capitalism. It is consistent with Marx, via Durkheim's work, to talk about stages of social development. Swartz (1997, p. 47) writes:

> Like Durkheim, Bourdieu works with the idea of a historical transition from fairly unified and undifferentiated societies to modern societies where various cultural modes of expression become differentiated and constituted as relatively autonomous fields.

Certainly, it is innovative to reinterpret Durkheim's idea of autonomy based on social unity as autonomy sustained with domination. However, I argue that this may be misleading for my study, according to the aforementioned conceptualisation of society. I argue this especially because on the basis of empirical studies, which show the continuity of a structure of social inequality from the pre-capitalist era to the contemporary society in everyday life, such as occurs in Japan and in India.[59] Pre-capitalist society may or may not be equipped with the conditions to exert symbolic violence in a capitalist form. Nevertheless, the structure of social inequality in pre-capitalist society persists into contemporary society and expresses itself in its capitalist form in the social spaces of everyday life.

Advancing Bourdieu's view regarding persisting structures of social inequality, Rehbein (2011a) and Houben (2014) call the existing structures of social inequality: *socio-cultures.*[60] This concept explains that the social hierarchy in the current society consists of different structures of an unequal power relationship, constructed in different periods in the past, persisting over time by changing their legitimisations, justifications and appearances. In this sense, the concept of socio-culture does not exclude the structure of social inequality, which originated in the pre-capitalist period. On this basis, each social practice of an individual expresses its specific socio-cultural meaning symbolically via its agent's habitus in a society. In short, the concept of socio-culture enables us to capture emerging social realities concerning conventional idea of castes, social classes or any other constructed social hierarchy in neo-liberal capitalist societies. These reinterpretations do not contradict with Bourdieu's concept of the human being, designated in his theory of habitus and symbolic

[59] This is shown with empirical studies of Baviskar and Ray (2014), which shows the structure of cast hierarchy is transforming itself to the new capitalist classes in India, and also a historical study of Ohashi (1972), which demonstrates that samurai class has reproduced itself as the higher socio-economic strata of Japanese society through Meiji period and the war time.

[60] Vester (2003) calls the similar structure: tradition line.

violence. My study thus agrees with Bourdieu's view of the human being, which conceives of individuals as rational, conscious and having willpower, but at the same time, as not being free from the social hierarchy constructed in a society.

3.3.1. Habitus

The concept of habitus developed throughout Bourdieu's academic career, and he explained what habitus is in a variety of ways. For example, in *Distinction* (2010), he describes habitus as a system of dispositions; in *The State Nobility* (1996, p. 53), he describes it as "socially structured biological individualities"; in *the Logic of Practice* (1990, p. 53), he writes "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures". Swartz (1997) studied these various descriptions of the concept of habitus in Bourdieu's writings, and pointed out that the fundamental idea of habitus is the individual's internal dispositions that generate actions. Accordingly, my understanding of habitus is an individually different generator of perceptions, dispositions and practices, which corresponds to the existing structure of social inequality in a given society. This explanation suggests that habitus operates from within agents, though it is neither strictly individual nor is it fully institutional.[61] On one hand, habitus is in itself heterogeneous by the fact that every individual is different in terms of his/her personality. At the same time, habitus is bound to the existing structure of social inequality, because an individual is necessarily born into a historically constituted particular socio-cultural environment. While living her life serially through time, she nurtures her so-called *sense of self* via habitus by experiencing what is possible and what is unlikely to happen in her life by going through structuring experiences.[62] In this sense, the working of habitus makes it possible for individuals to be sensible and reasonable. Simultaneously, an individual's everyday practices and behaviour are regulated more or less to an appropriate level in line with her social position. In other words, habitus helps each individual to cope adequately with his/her constantly changing social situation. As long as she is dealing adequately and appropriately with her social situations, she does not

[61] Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), and Swartz (1997).

[62] The structuring experiences are, for example, expectations and navigations from parents, the friends, teachers, and other people they encounter. Based the collection of such experiences, one learns the limit of possibilities. See Baker and Brown (2008) and Bok (2010)

disturb the existing structure of social inequality and, consequently, maintains the *status quo* in the existing social hierarchy.[63]

3.3.2. Symbolic violence

Grasping social inequality in the theoretical framework of habitus suggests that unequal power relationships and their perpetuation in a society are symbolically mediated in the reflexive mechanism of *cultural reproduction* and *symbolic violence*. It is symbolic firstly in the sense that the logic of domination is not directly recognised as it derives from the existing structure of social inequality; but it is seen as it drives from individuals' differences in natural attributes. For example, in *The State Nobility* (1996), Bourdieu demonstrates the strong class bias in the academic selection hidden behind the logic of cultural taste in French society. Teachers, who tend to be familiar with the upper class habitus, are more likely to find students from the upper class as having ~~a~~ good taste in culture; on the other hand, working class students or the rural students are not likely to be considered as such.[64] As cultural taste is an important indicator of "talented" students in France, the upper class students tend to acquire better grades and more prestigious academic degrees compared to the lower class students. Certified with more valuable merits, the upper class students are more likely to achieve higher socioeconomic status compared to working class students *i.e. cultural reproduction*. Secondly, it is symbolic in a sense that the existing structure of social inequality is concealed with the logic of equality and freedom, and members of a given society, both the dominant and the dominated alike, misrecognise such inequality as natural, *i.e. symbolic domination*.[65] Meritocracy with the idea of FEO particularly facilitates people in prestigious social positions to give some credit to themselves and people in marginalised positions to take at least some blame for their situations upon themselves, by requiring everyone to reflect on their amount of talent or effort – *symbolic violence*.[66] In a reflexive relationship between cultural reproduction and symbolic violence, the structure of social

[63] I use the word: adequately, because individuals reflect on their situations and strategically cope with them. Bourdieu explains that habitus enables "the strategy generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations (…) a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks." Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* 1992, p. 18

[64] Bourdieu (1996 and 2008)

[65] See Bourdieu (1991 and 1996)

[66] Rehbein and Souza (2014, p. 19)

inequality is perpetuated via everyday practices without acknowledging the existence of the underlying structure of social inequality.

3.3.3. Misrecognition

Bourdieu's theory of social inequality implies that everyone takes an active part in justifying the existence of a given social inequality. On this point, it is important to acknowledge that the dominant does not usually possess any specific intention to exercise power over the rest of the population for the purpose of domination. Bourdieu (1990, p. 133) writes:

> The system of cultural good production and the system producing the producers also fulfil ideological functions, as a by product, through the very logic of their functioning, owing to the fact that the mechanisms through which they contribute to the reproduction of the social order and the permanence of the relations of domination remain hidden.

It is false to suppose the existence of such an intention because the supposition is based on an assumption that class-consciousness, or at least a group consciousness among the dominant might exist. In a Marxist tradition, Schumpeter (1951) and Poulantzas (1978) explained the possibility of the lack of class-consciousness in the dominant and dominated classes and, therefore, a lack of class ideology. Accordingly, a social class is not a self-aware identity of people, but rather, the creation of researchers based on the observation of classification of economic subjects. Agreeing this line of thinking, Bourdieu argues that even the dominant themselves are also not free from the aforementioned symbolic process; symbolic system is most effective when everyone *misrecognises* themselves as being free and equal. In this manner, everyone misrecognises the individuals' socio-cultural difference as difference in natural attributes such as talent, diligence and competence.

Bourdieu's theory of habitus and symbolic violence provides the missing link between the substantial mechanism of FEO and the ideological working of FEO. The ideological working of FEO requires each individual to perceive herself as free and equal. Through their experience of meritocratic selections with the idea of FEO, individuals internalise the modernist idea of self and time via habitus and make sense out of their condition of existence in accord with symbolic liberalism. In other words, this experience disciplines individuals to perceive themselves as an autonomous and independent social atom and; on this basis, individuals generates actions via habitus without the context of the existing power structures. However, in practice, FEO contributes to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality. As a result, the structure of social inequality is unknowingly perpetuated via agents' practice in everyday life. Through a general social transformation *e.g.* a general

increase of living standard and the tendency toward mass education, a new cultural frame of inequality emerges.[67] However, it does not mean that the constructed power structure of the past simply disappears. While the hierarchical relationship between each socio-cultural groups remain unchanged, the characteristics of each habitus transforms over time.

3.4. Opportunity, aspiration and capability

The field of justice study assumes that every time an individual faces an opportunity, she blindly takes it.[68] Instead, Bourdieu posits that individuals reflect on relevant factors, such as chances of success, the cost of trying and the risk of failure, in order to decide whether to attempt or not, on each occasion they face an opportunity; this reflection, generated via habitus, is expressed as a framework of *individual aspiration*.[69] This is because opportunity is formally available for everyone; however, perceived chances of success or failure are individually different depending on their socio-cultural origin. Even though the concept of opportunity is vital for his arguments regarding symbolic violence via FEO, Bourdieu does not discuss the concept of opportunity *per se*.[70] More concretely, Bourdieu suggests misrecognition of equality of opportunity leads individuals to inculcate ideas embedded in the social structure in terms of everyday practice; however, he did not explain how it actually happen via conceptualising opportunity. This is because his interest regarding the concept of opportunity lies in pointing out its ideological character.[71]

Amartya Sen, who shares his scientific task with Bourdieu, offers my study an operational view of opportunity.[72] Similarly to Bourdieu, Sen aims at uncovering taken-for-granted false beliefs that appear to be objective: *objective illusion*, which denotes a naturalised belief, whose maintenance is beneficial only for a limited number of members of a society. Taking a notice of ideological characteristics of social beliefs, this idea agrees with

[67] For more detail, see Vester (2003). According to Calhoun (1991), this also implies that the same practice is interpreted differently according to social, geographical space and temporal differences.
[68] For instance, Rawls (1997) and Sen (2010).
[69] Swartz (1997, p. 103)
[70] Swartz (1997, p. 43) explains that Bourdieu's concept of misrecognition is similar to what Marx calls "false consciousness" regarding this understanding of symbolic mediation of power relationships. Regardless of the similarity in their grasp of power mediation in a society, Bourdieu was critical regarding the Marxist idea of false consciousness, as Marx failed to explain how it actually functions.
[71] See Swartz (1997, Chapter. 4)
[72] Some scholars have already pointed out the possibility to incorporate the understanding of social inequality of Amartya Sen into the one of Pierre Bourdieu. For instance, see Rehbein (2011b) and Bowman (2010).

Bourdieu's *general science of practice*.[73] Actually, their concepts remind that our understanding of social reality has been and will always be fundamentally subjective. Sen calls our necessarily subjective understanding of the social reality *positional comprehension.* On this ground, what Sen and Bourdieu are concerned with is the Modernist tendency to institutionalise such a subjective view of the social reality as universal and express its legitimacy as rational, scientific and objective.[74] Sen criticises this tendency especially because such a transcendental and a systematic belief significantly influence an individual's understanding of her social surroundings and lead to "protest-free tolerance of social asymmetry and discrimination".[75] Uncovering the genesis of institutionalised social beliefs, Sen believes, will lead to the reversing the ongoing process and the emancipation of the increasing number of the dominated.

3.4.1. Debate between Sen and Rawls

Due to their common interest in social justice, Sen and Rawls have engaged in a debate on their views on the formulation of justice. Sen criticises the concept of *original position* in the Rawlsian theory of justice as an example of positional comprehension, and the concept of opportunity as a resource constituted from this perspective as it expresses an objective illusion.[76] Particularly, Sen points out that the imagined contents of original position assume a certain type of polity, particularly one that is democratic, constitutional, capitalist and certainly Christian.[77] Various problems derive from the very fact that societies with such specific social arrangements are not universal; there are many different social arrangements in terms of the combination of political, legal and economic system, and further, cultural and historical background across the world. The establishment of a totally just society, which Rawls envisioned, requires comprehensive and revolutionary institutional rearrangements in any types of polity for sure. However, the un-alleged political entities would require even more fundamental societal changes compared to, in a narrow sense, the one of U.S. or, in broader sense, the ones of the Western countries. This hidden assumption embedded in the original position sets, in Sen's term, an *entrance barrier* against political entities with

[73] For more detailed explanation of Sen's objectivity, see Sen (2010, p. 162-163). For comprehensive explanation of the general science of practice is offered in the work of Swartz (1997, p. 56).
[74] Taylor (1989)'s explanation will strengthen this point.
[75] Sen (2010, p. 162)
[76] See Sen (2010, chapter. 2)
[77] See Rawls (1971:1999) (1985) and also (2001). I add Christianity because the political, legal and economic traditions of the West cannot be separated from its religious context.

different types of social arrangements.[78] This leads Sen to conclude Rawls' view of the individual at the original position as exclusive, and therefore, unfair. As a reply to Sen's criticisms, Rawls (2001) admits the concept of original position assume a certain type of political tradition that is a constitutional democracy with a capitalist economy.[79] However, Rawls argues that the equal rights and liberty in political, economic and civil fields are still the basic requirements to envision any just society; on this ground, he defends the concept of original position.

The debate between Sen and Rawls reveals that their purposes of study are fundamentally different. On one hand, Rawls wrote *A Theory of Justice* to envision an ideal, purely just and constitutional democratic society within the context of capitalism at a theoretical level; unfortunately, when it comes to its actualisation, it is unrealistic and even if it happened it would be exclusive. On the other hand, Sen wrote *The Idea of Justice* to pursue practical relevance in order to make concrete changes in the existing unfair social arrangements. The complication arises from practices in the field of policy making; it is mainly Rawls' view of justice, which is applied in the field. As such revolutionary social re-arrangements are, practically speaking, unlikely to happen. The institutionalised original position functions simply as the standard of evaluation, especially at the global level. The closer a polity is to the original position, the better and more advanced a society it appears to be, and *vice versa*.[80]

3.4.2. Integrating capability and aspiration

Distancing himself from Rawls' transcendental formulation of opportunity as a resource, Sen approaches the concept of opportunity from the perspective of individual *capability* and *functioning.* He explains that *capability* is "the actual ability of people to choose to live [the] different kinds of lives within their reach"[81] and, the concept of *functioning* indicates the actual lived life or living situations of individuals.[82] Facing an opportunity, assuming a given

[78] See Sen (2006)
[79] Rawls replied to Sen's criticism, which was originally delivered as a lecture in 1979 at Stanford University and later published in 1982. Sen has further elaborated his criticism toward Rawls' idea in different publications. For example, see Sen (2006 and 2010)
[80] Rehbein and Souza (2014) argue this point further with the concept of *symbolic racism.*
[81] Sen (2010, p. 237)
[82] I briefly note that the capability approach has developed over time for the purpose of focus on the different social issues such as inequality, freedom, rationality, identity and justice; it was pointed out that Sen defines the terminology differently according to the issues of focus. In addition to this, other scholars who are interested in developing the capability approach, such as Martha Nussbaum, took a significantly different path from Sen, see

individual would recognise the opportunity, Sen considers it just only when the individual has the freedom to access the necessary resources and options to realise the opportunity. These resources are not merely economic, but also cultural and social, which means to include information, guidance, encouragement, and time.[83] This is to say that the achievement of freedom of access to required resources and options to realise the opportunity is therefore the situation in which *capability* is fully established. In this manner, in Sen's work, the egalitarian principle of equality of opportunity does not say much about fairness as long as individuals do not have access to the necessary resources and freedom in order to realise their *capable* life.

From a sociological perspective, there is a weakness in Sen's concept of opportunity. Unlike other economists, Sen understands freedom in terms of the possibility of acting *i.e. positive liberty*. Positive liberty indicates the possibility of acting for the purpose of achieving individual goals or of taking a control over one's life; *negative liberty*, on the other hand, indicates the absence of restrictions, obstacles or constraints.[84] This is to say that Sen understands that "an individual is free to do and be as they wish within the constraints imposed by conversion factors".[85] This suggests that the scope of the *capability* approach is limited to the individual; in other words, Sen's idea of opportunity does not include its social aspect, in which Bourdieu is chiefly interested. According to Sen, individuals have the capability to achieve the life that they value. From Bourdieu's point of view, the perception of one's own "limit of possibility" must be generated via habitus. Sen's concept of capability is very similar to Bourdieu's concept of aspiration, but what if self-perception of "lives within their reach" itself is stratified in a given society as Bourdieu argues with the concept of habitus? Making my point clear, Sen's idea of justice lacks perspective regarding the social hierarchy as a whole and Bourdieu's theory of social inequality lacks reflection on opportunity *per se*.

I argue, nevertheless, that their ideas can be considered as complementary. What Sen's work can offer to Bourdieu's work is this understanding of opportunity examined carefully at the individual level. What Bourdieu's work can offer to Sen's work is the theory

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Hart (2014). This contributed to make the capability approach more complicated to understand. As our aim is not to understand the capability approach as a whole but to use his concept of opportunity, I would like to let this point aside.

[83] See Bok (2010), Sen (2010) and also Hart (2014)

[84] The more detailed discussion of the terminology can be found at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative/

[85] See Hart (2014, p. 39)

of socio-historical nature of human practice, namely, the theory of habitus and symbolic violence. From this integrated perspective, aspiration is formulated within individually different "social realities of possibility", and individuals constantly re-adjust their aspirations to a reasonable and realistic level in terms of their perceived position in a social hierarchy.[86] In other words, individuals exercise symbolic violence onto themselves every time they face an opportunity. In this manner, individuals reproduce and perpetuate the social hierarchy, exactly by achieving the life that they value.[87] While exerting effort to achieve the life they value, they justify the existence of social inequality. In this sense, hypothetically, people justify the existence of inequality of opportunity regarding their socio-cultural characteristics by misrecognising the life they actually live as an outcome of their competence. I note this argument is only possible when people actually understand their living situation as their own achievement. This point must be tested with empirical study.

3.5. Conclusion

My thesis views society as "an aggregation of symbolically meaningful practices", agreeing with Rehbein and Souza (2014)'s interpretation. This interpretation enables us to grasp every practice as it being tied to power structures in a society, and at the same time, it is still open for the theoretical framework suggested by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu explains the concept of habitus as an individually different generator of perception, disposition and practice, which correspond to the structure of social hierarchy constructed in a society over time. This concept designates individuals as rational and having agency but; at the same time, socially bounded. From this perspective, social inequality in the current society is a persisting social hierarchy of the past and; the perpetuation of unequal power structure is symbolically mediated via individuals' everyday practices. Especially, the idea of *Fair Equality of Opportunity* has an ideological aspect, which facilitates everyone, both the dominant and the dominated alike, to misrecognise their living situations as a direct expression of achievements on the basis of fair social competitions among "free and equal" individuals; from this standpoint, the existence of a persisting social hierarchy becomes invisible. This contributes

[86] See McDonough (1997). Readjustment is based on, for example, guidance, expectation form parents and significant others, and also collections of cultural, social and economic experiences. Scholars who are interested in capacity to aspire agree on this point. Connolly and Healy (2004) Baker and Brown (2008) and Bok (2010)

[87] Strengthening this point, it is empirically shown that it is not true that everyone and every socio-cultural group seek to be successful according to the same life goal. See Connolly and Healy (2004), Bok (2010), Rehbein (2011a) and Hart (2014)

to give some credits to the dominant to be in the higher social positions and, conversely, to put at least some blame on the dominated to be in the lower social positions, especially by herself onto herself –*symbolic violence*. In short, the theory of symbolic violence explains that individuals, unwittingly, take an active role in justifying and perpetuating the existing social inequality. Inequality, which derives from social exclusion of a certain socio-cultural group from acquiring opportunity, is indeed an important study topic; nevertheless, Bourdieu argues that the expansion of the range of equality of opportunity does not automatically result in achievement of an egalitarian society by demonstrating the mechanism by which "free and equal" individuals contribute to perpetuate the existing social inequality in the context of all-inclusive social competition. In this sense, Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence formulated within the habitus theory shows strength in explaining the hidden mechanism of perpetuation of the social inequality in the contemporary capitalist society.

In order to pursue this line of argument, the operationalisation of the concept of opportunity is essential. However, in fact, Bourdieu does not talk about the concept of opportunity itself; he lays his main focus of his study on pointing out the ideological characteristics of equality of opportunity. I drew a relevant discussion from the capability approach suggested by Amartya Sen, who shares the critical attitude toward equality of opportunity with Bourdieu. Sen criticises Rawlsian theory of justice to regard an opportunity as a type of resource, and instead, approaches it from the perspective of an individual's *capability*. By concept of capability, Sen captures the ability of individuals to pursue their aspired life. From this point of view, equality of opportunity does not say much about fairness as long as people do not possess social, cultural and economic resources to realise a given opportunity. Integrating this idea of *capability* to Bourdieu's idea of aspiration, I argue that individuals constantly re-adjust their view of "life within their reach" to a reasonable and realistic level in terms of their perceived position in a social hierarchy.[88] In this manner, I argued hypothetically, individuals contribute to perpetuate the existing social inequality, precisely by exerting effort to achieve an individually different desirable life. I note that, at this point, this argument remains hypothetical; whether people actually understand their living situation as their own achievement must be empirically tested.

[88] See McDonough (1997). Readjustment is based on, for example, guidance, expectation from parents and significant others, and also collections of cultural, social and economic experiences. Scholars who are interested in capacity to aspire, such as Connolly and Healy (2004) Baker and Brown (2008) and Bok (2010), agree on this point.

Chapter 4.
Applicability of Bourdieu's Theory to Japanese Cases:

Epistemological teaching of Bourdieu and revision of criticisms

4.1. Introduction

In the lecture at Tokyo University in 1986, Bourdieu pointed out possible similarities in the mechanism, by which a structure of power hierarchy of the past has been justified and perpetuated via meritocracy in Japan and in France, given "the exceptional significance" attached to academic certificates in both countries. Almost twenty years later, one of today's leading scholars in the field of elite study, Michael Hartmann (2007 and 2011) examined this statement on the empirical basis. In another lecture at Collège de France in 1991, he argued that the modernisation process of France in 16th century and of Japan in 19th century shares similarity in its characteristic as, what he calls, "conservative revolution", which indicates that the group of people who initiated the changes managed to install a social order beneficial for themselves. From a perspective of Japanese historian, Ohashi Ryuken (1972) and Douglas Howland (2002) confirmed the continuity of power structure from the Feudal era to the modern Japan. From a sociological point of view, Takeuchi You (1995) pointed out the tendency in Japanese education to evaluate students, who abide by norms, as competent and; this contributes to perpetuation of state domination via "Japanese culture", which was invented in the Modernisation process in 19th century.[89] In short, Bourdieu, himself, occasionally pointed out the relevance of his theory to Japanese society; and some sociologists have endeavoured to verify his statements. In spite of these efforts, the application of Bourdieu theory to study Japanese cases still appears reckless and thoughtless for many scholars' eyes.[90] The overall purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate my view on how and why Bourdieu's theory can be applied to cultural context outside France from an epistemological point of view. I start this task from introducing the epistemological framework of Bourdieu, which is grounded in his philosophy of science. I develop my inquiry especially along with the two related meanings of *reflexivity*. From this epistemological point of view, I proceed to reflect on the criticism on Bourdieu's theory regarding its applicability to other cultural context outside of French society. Particularly, I argue that the criticism is

[89] For more detailed discussion of invention of Japanese culture, see Morris-Suzuki (1995)
[90] For Japanese tendency of reception of Bourdieu's idea, see Ogino (2013) and also Sanada (2016).

formulated on the epistemological ground of structuralism. In the end, I suggest an alternative way of doing science to take the historically constituted logic of practice seriously. On this ground, I argue that Bourdieu's theory is applicable to Japanese cases beyond structural differences between French and Japanese societies.

4.2. Epistemological framework

The theoretical framework, suggested by Pierre Bourdieu, proposes an integration of the objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies. More concretely, it requires to bringing the symbolic idea of *self*, objectified in the social structure and the subjective internalisation of such values into hermeneutical relationship. This epistemological standpoint blurs the formal distinction between objectivity and subjectivity, which has been consolidated as a result of their dichotomy in the history of social science. In a strict methodological language, this endeavour to deconstruct the boundary between subject and object is called *reflexivity.*[91] To note, Bourdieu uses the concept of reflexivity as well; however, his concept focuses on the possibility of symbolic violence in the name of science, which is a reflection one step further than the methodological use of the term. Nevertheless, a brief discussion of methodological reflexivity will merit our understanding of Bourdieu's epistemological framework.

Instead of a long standing dichotomy between subjectivism and objectivism, the concept of reflexivity in epistemology teaches to understand human actions as it being generated via the permanently contingent process of hermeneutics between individual subjectivity and objectively designated self. What I mean by individual subjectivity is what Taylor (1989) calls *expressive self,* which is based on individuals' unique experience; in this sense, individual subjectivity is heterogeneous. In Rehbein and Souza (2014)'s explanation, "the expressive self is not about identity of social atoms but about the voice of the individual, which cannot be mistaken for anyone else's". This is, by the fact that every individual is different, ontologically true. Yet, it is not enough to grasp a whole picture of unconscious perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality only with the individual subjectivity, especially when it comes to the historically constituted tendency, which human actions expresses at the macro level and its misrecognition. Therefore, on the other, there is objective self, which is based on objectively imposed idea of self in social structure: *punctual self*. Via imposition of the idea of self, the social structure exerts its disciplinary power onto

[91] See Davies (2002).

individuals to perceive themselves according to a discursive totality of discourses of social universe. This means that a society exists "out there" and people's life goes on with or without the existence of a given individual, for example myself; ontologically speaking, this is also true. However, if everyone on earth got banished, a society does not exist anymore. In this sense, a society is depended on human being for its sustainment and reproduction. Similarly to the mere subjectivist explanation, solely objectivist explanations of human actions as it being totally controlled by social structure cannot grasp a whole picture of a social reality. In summary, reflexivity in the methodological sense calls for exploration of a social phenomenon from the eyes of the individual subjectivity and the objective self. To add, this methodological debate on reflexivity took a radical turn to *"radical constructivism"* to pursuit to achieve introspective reflexivity between researcher herself and knowledge acquired through research; deliberately, it was to investigate an abyss between subjective and objective. However, the endeavour turned out to be not only deconstructive but also destructive for the field of social science.[92]

Rejecting this radicalism as it being an endeavour virtually meaningless to pursue for the practice of social science, Bourdieu considers to integrating the two epistemological grounds.[93] On one hand, Bourdieu adopts objectivist approaches in order to observe institutionalised socio-cultural biases in statistical regularities. He considers these regularities are often visible only to societal researchers in statistical data because they are the ones who take time and effort to search for and calculate such regularities.[94] This means, on the contrary, Bourdieu breaks with the subjectivist approach in terms of taking everyday representations of social phenomena at their face value.[95] He does so, firstly because, the way in which individuals perceive and evaluate themselves, including their surrounding environments, does not remain the same over time; rather, individuals deal with the social reality *reflexively*. Bourdieu uses this terms to mean that agents reflect upon a given circumstance and interpret it flexibly for the sake of their own strategies and interests. Following a lapse of time, an agent's surrounding social environment and/or personal

[92] "Radical constructivism" is in Swartz (1997, p. 271)'s term. Davies (2002) calls the same school of thought "radical constructive reflexivity". Bourdieu (2003, p. 282) calls this trend "textual reflexivity" with "interpretive scepticism".
[93] Bourdieu (2003) admits that these reflexive attempts are useful for the purpose of critics of positivism. However, he argues that it overlooks the significance of "social condition of possibility" which make the observed practice "adequate" and "natural" in a given social reality. In this sense, he considers the textual reflexivity as meaningless for the purpose of studying "lived experiences".
[94] See Swartz (1997)
[95] Bourdieu (1990, p. 102)

interests will necessarily change; the way agents perceive the given social phenomenon changes accordingly. Secondly, the subjectivist approach tends to lack a perspective on the social hierarchy constructed in a society as a whole.[96] Bourdieu sees society as profoundly unequal by the fact that its is always at the stake of power struggle. This unequal power relationship is constructed on the basis of, in Bourdieu's term, practical knowledge, which is *learned ignorance*; something that have been acquired without reflection on the conditions of the agent's existence in terms of unequal power relationships.[97] In this sense, practical knowledge enacts actions without representing a given individuals in the context of societal power struggle. This means that individuals are not necessarily aware of their existence in the power struggles and their unequal power relationship with others in everyday life. It has also been empirically shown that individuals tend to believe that they are "free, autonomous, independent, self-transparent, conscious and in charge of their own choices" in contemporary democratic and capitalist societies.[98] In this sense, any subjectivist representation of social phenomenon is only partial in terms of time and social space. In sum, the observed regularities in a given society are a making of the unintentional actions of individuals. On the other hand, Bourdieu objects to a simple explanation of the observed regularities from an objectivist point of view. Bourdieu considers that individuals are driven by their interests and goals — people are rational agents. However, this does not mean that Bourdieu agrees with so-called rational choice theory. According to Bourdieu, individuals make sense of their everyday life; however, they do not *"*seek to satisfy [the] formal standard of logical coherence*"*, that is available for societal observers at any time.[99] Instead, he considers that an individual's actions are organised over time according to their *practical sense*. With the theory of practice, Bourdieu (1990, p. 99) seeks to explain the "logic of social laws (…) without falling over into the imaginary anthropology of 'rational actor' theories." Differently put, he considers the results of rational thinking as being individually different.[100] Bourdieu (1990, p. 102) writes:

> (T)hey (the agents) cannot appropriate theoretically the practical matrix from which these moves can be generated and which they possess only in practice, *'in so far as they are what they are'*, as Plato puts it.

[96] See Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 134)
[97] Bourdieu (1990, p. 102)
[98] Rehbein and Souza (2014)
[99] Citing Nietzsche (1969, p. 119: cited in Bourdieu 1990), Bourdieu (1990, p. 28) refuses to posit subject as 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing'. Also see Swartz (1997, p. 59)
[100] Taylor (1989) also argues that so-called rational thinking is a way of thinking, thus, the common assumption that the rational thinking will lead to homogeneous thinking result is fundamentally false. See Flyvbjerg (1998) for a convincing empirical study on this issue.

In this manner, Bourdieu's approach aims at taking the temporal aspect of human life and the symbolic meanings of social practices seriously. Finally, objectivists explain that human rational actions are, so to speak, forced on individuals by social structures. In other words, the objectivist episteme denies individuals' agency, willpower and/or self-awareness.[101] To sum up, Bourdieu considers, on one hand, that each individual is unique and lives her everyday life rationally, consciously and reasonably; on the other hand, everyday practices demonstrate regularities and patterns concerning unequally structured social reality when a macro-view is taken.

Application of an objectivist explanation, which designates individuals to act according to logic of large-scale institutions and also in accordance with other members of society by naming it rational, necessarily leads to what Spivak (1988, p. 76) calls *epistemological violence*.[102] Surely, Spivak particularly deals with the epistemological violence exercised in the context of colonialism; a colonial body exercises power over its colonial subjects by disqualifying native knowledge as inadequate, unscientific and irrational. However, her caution is still relevant for various social settings. This is exactly what Bourdieu is concerned in his meaning of the concept of *reflexivity*. With this concept, Bourdieu calls an attention to the possibility of exercising symbolic domination from researchers onto the research subjects imposing researchers' personal disposition and interests, embedded in choices of concepts, theory, methods and research topics.[103] Particularly, the field of social science should avoid imposing an explanation, which is discrepant from actual practices in social reality. This is not only because this way of thinking is unfit to understand social phenomenon; but also because it means that the field of social science would risk exercising the epistemological domination onto people who do not fit into such an explanation by evaluating them as different, special, inadequate and/or irrational. In short, Bourdieu's formulation of reflexivity encourages to being conscious about what researchers are doing on the on-going situation of social reality while doing research. According to Bourdieu, the lack of reflexive perspective in a given research creates a discrepancy between practical and theoretical knowledge and to commit *"intellectual*

[101] See Bourdieu (1990), Bourdieu *et al.* (1991 a and b) and Rehbein (2011b)

[102] Similarly, Bourdieu (2008) wrote about the powerlessness of the peasants. He observed that the peasants have never been capable of realising themselves through their own identification. Rehbein and Souza (2014) also take this perspective in order to study the Global South.

[103] Swartz (1997, p. 270) explains that Bourdieu uses the concept of *reflexivity* to improve the practice of science itself. To note, according to Swartz, Bourdieu himself failed to apply the reflexive perspective on himself in *Homo Academicus (1989)*. Regardless of Bourdieu's failure, I consider it as an important teaching.

fallacy".[104] Bringing this point further, Rehbein and Souza (2014) call this type of social sciences –*affirmative science*. Its proliferation makes it impossible for us to think human society outside of ideological view of human society founded on the basis of capitalism and democracy –symbolic liberalism and; consequently, it makes the mechanism of social phenomenon invisible.

This means that my failure to employ reflexive perspective will lead this research to contribute to conceal the mechanism of perpetuation of social inequality invisible while doing research on the very topic. I should avoid this. Concretely, Bourdieu's work suggests to keep two reflections in mind: firstly, we researchers must reflect on our choices of concepts and research topics to be more aware of the existence of our personal dispositions as much as they can; secondly, we must be aware of the scientific contribution it makes to the on-going social situations of focus. I will introduce my strategy to avoid producing another example of affirmative science in the later part of this chapter on *crafting*.

4.3. Criticism on applicability

Despite of his philosophy of science, which calls our attention to a risk of exercising epistemological domination from the scientific field, Bourdieu's overall theory of social inequality, underpinned with the concept of habitus, has been criticised for its applicability to other cultural contexts outside of France. This criticism is reasoned to be relevant for the fact that Bourdieu did not develop a systematic methodological tool to confirm the existence of habitus. Responding to this criticism, a number of projects, which aim at constructing a systematic methodology within the theoretical framework of habitus, have been carried out worldwide since the late 1980s. Inspired by Bourdieu's idea, scholars reinterpreted a society as various fields of power struggle in terms of capitals. This reinterpretation made possible for scholars to find functional similarity in social institutions of different countries in terms of struggle for capital. In this framework, for example, Vester (2003) developed *Milieu Approach* in Germany under the influence of Bourdieu's study and British cultural studies with the financial support of Volkswagen Foundation since 1987. In Japan, Kondo (2011 and 2012) has developed *Geometric Social Space Analysis,* using *Multiple Correspondence*

[104] See Swartz (1997, p. 274).

Analysis[105]*,* and quantitatively shown that there is a strong correlation between the amount of cultural capital and economic capital possessed in Japanese society. Similarly, Savage *et al.* (2013) defined social class based on Pierre Bourdieu's approach and carried out so-called *latent class analysis*[106] in collaboration with the BBC. In these studies, a social class is explained as being a multidimensional construct that is not solely economic, but also profoundly cultural and social. On this basis, each dimension of class was measured via a reinterpreted concept of *capital*.[107] These methodological developments in the field of Bourdieu's study contributed largely to make it easier for researchers to apply Bourdieu's class analysis to different cultural contexts and to confirm the correlation between individuals' lifestyle and social positions.[108]

In Bourdieu's eyes, however, this criticism is rather historical than scientific. In the Western scientific field, there is a tradition to distinguish objective structures from subjective processes, macro level from micro level phenomenon and/or, material and non-material phenomenon. For instance, in U.S. tradition, there is a clear distinction between objective/subjective and micro/macro analysis.[109] Also in European tradition, there is a distinction between structure, which is material phenomena and agency, which means non-material phenomena. These meta-theoretical distinctions of scale of study designate theory and method appropriate for a given object of study. This way of doing science is globalised and perceived as a standard scientific practice in the international field of science.[110] In this

[105] *Multiple Correspondence Analysis* is a data-analysis method to reconstruct a structure of social space in terms of similarity and differences in individual characteristics based on multiple quantitative variables. See Kondo (2011).

[106] Savage, et al. (2013) wrote: "(The latent class analysis) is based on the idea that some parameters of a statistical analysis model differ across unobserved subgroups, which form the categories of a categorical latent variable. It can be distinguished from factor analysis, which identifies continuous latent variables. While latent class analysis is primarily used for the analysis of categorical data, it can also be used for clustering with continuous variables – such a clustering procedure tends to outperform other non-hierarchical cluster analysis such as K-means clustering and it is this method which we adopt here" (p. 229) For a more detailed explanation of their approach, see Savage, et al. (2013, pp. 223-229).

[107] *Economic capital* indicates income and wealth, *cultural capital* is the ability to appreciate cultural goods, certified by educational credentials, and *social capital* indicates width of social network based on contacts and connections.

[108] Especially, the Sinus Institute has studied 28 countries over the last 30 years. Based on the large number of samples, the Sinus Institute visualises and quantifies the composition of milieus in a given society for the purpose of scientific use as well as of commercial and political use. See http://www.sinus-institut.de/.

[109] Ritzer, particularly, explains four different focuses of analysis (1) macro level objectivism, which studies large scale material realities *i.e.* society, law, bureaucracy, architecture, technology and language, (2) macro level subjectivism, which studies small scale objective entities such as patterns of behaviour, actions and interactions, (3) micro level subjectivism, that studies small scale non-material phenomena *i.e.* culture, norms and values and (4) micro level subjectivism, which elucidates small scale mental processes *e.g.* perceptions, beliefs and social constructions.

[110] Rehbein (2015)'s work strengthens this point.

process of standardisation of scientific practices, theories and methods are reinterpreted as if being a set of tools for researchers, which are universally applicable. In this sense, even the aforementioned recent methodological developments in the field of Bourdieu's study confirms to the traditional and universal way of doing science.

4.3.1. Piecemeal appropriation

Especially in Japanese field of Bourdieu study, the tendency of instrumentalisation of Bourdieu's idea is apparent. What is immediately noticeable in the existing field of Bourdieu's study is a so-called strong *division of labour*. Each preeminent scholar has one or two theoretical concepts of Bourdieu, which they are specialised in. For example, Mizushima has published a number of works on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, Komatsuda is the leading scholar concerning the concepts of *stratégie* and *champs*; Yasuda is specialised in Bourdieu's works on *Pratique;* Honda wrote several works on the theory of *violence symbolique*; while Miyajima is a leading figure of the theory of cultural reproduction and inequality.[111] As Maruyama (1961:2013) once analogised it to studying religious manuscripts, they study, examine and learn given concepts carefully and faithfully with original texts; this makes their conceptual comprehension concrete and firm. This concrete understanding of concepts legitimises each scholar to establish one's own field of specialisation and; on this basis, they cooperate each other without risking any conflicts. Regrettably, this segmentation within the field of study suggests that Bourdieu's overall theory of social inequality exists as a *discursive totality of discourse.* This is to say that the theoretical effort to assimilate the mechanism of persisting structure of social inequality explained in a hermeneutical relationship of different concepts has been entirely absent in Japanese field of Bourdieu's study. The general lack of reflection on the overarching theoretical framework of social inequality enables Japanese scholars of Bourdieu's study to separate Bourdieu's thought, concept and theory from its French cultural context and to adopt as a mere analytical tool.

What is unique in Japanese field of Bourdieu's study is that this tendency of piece meal appropriation resulted in an asymmetrical development between the theory of cultural reproduction and of symbolic violence. To elaborate, Japanese scholars have exerted much effort in applying the theory of cultural reproduction to Japanese cases and; almost entirely

[111] One of the comprehensive work concerning Bourdieu's idea in Japan was published is Ishii and Miyajima (eds.) published in 2003. For more detailed discussion, see my work *'Bourdieu in Japan: Selective Reception and Segmented Field'* published in 2016.

neglected the theory of symbolic violence.[112] This asymmetrical development can be explained by the combination of the strong social belief of the egalitarian nature of Japanese society and strong political interests in establishing a positive correlation between education and economic development.[113] The works of Tachibanaki (1998) and Sato (2000) on the on-going situation of widening economic disparity in Japan greatly contributed to call the myth of egalitarian society in Japan into question. Nevertheless, Kondo (2011 and 2012) criticises that Japanese field of sociology of education still put its major focus on measuring the impact of educational policies and of educational system for students' academic achievements. This research framework, in which such a political interest is strongly rooted, contributed to making scholars of Japanese society reluctant to tackle politically critical aspects underlying Bourdieu's theory. Furthermore, the asymmetrical developments have already built up a research paradigm, and the paradigm makes it even harder for students of Japanese society to investigate the topic of symbolic violence. In this manner, it is very common for scholars to omit the theory of symbolic violence as it being specific to French cultural context given the remarkable structural differences between French and Japanese societies.[114] However, given the popularity of theory of cultural reproduction theory, from my perspective, such a criticism cannot defend its plausibility.

4.4. Crafting

I emphasise that my attempt to apply Bourdieu's theory to a case from Japan is not a promotion of Bourdieu's theory as the universally applicable one. The universal theories and methods are so generalised that it is context-less; research questions, generated within the framework of context-less theories, are also necessarily context-less. In the same line with my criticism on the idea of Fair Equality of Opportunity, I find the universal theories and methods problematic; the concept of self embedded in such theories and methods disregards the significance of locally specific socio-cultural characteristics. I remind you that individuals are rational, wilful, purposeful and strategic in Bourdieu's theoretical framework; and at the same time not interested in satisfying the universal laws of behaviour, which social scientists

[112] Ogino (2013, p. 104) also points out the same tendency in the trend of reception of ideas of Jean Baudrillard.
[113] For example, see Miyajima (1992)
[114] Ogino (2013: 104) agrees on this point. He writes "Bourdieu studies the way symbolic power struggles are played out through culture in modern society. In Japan, however, the power struggle part is removed from his theory. Thus, the viewpoint that a linking for a certain culture is a differentiation strategy is removed, and all that remains is an emphasis on the fact that cultural capital is only valid in certain fields."

tend to be interested in establishing. From this perspective, the application of the universal theory does not really help us to understand the nature and the mechanism of perpetuation of social inequality especially because it requires to ignoring social agents' practical logic. Such studies would provide readers with explanations of social phenomenon, which is discrepant from social reality.[115] Furthermore, as an *affirmative science,* it would reinforce aforementioned Modernist assumptions and concealing the mechanism of perpetuating social inequality. This is contradicting to my purpose of study.

Rejecting the historically constituted way of being scientific, Bourdieu emphasise reflexivity in sociology. The purposes of reflexivity in Bourdieu's sense are to avoid producing another example of affirmative science, firstly, by reflecting upon researchers' own personal disposition embedded in the choice of research topic and concepts; and secondly, by reflecting upon the scientific contribution to the on-going situation of social inequality. As a key method to achieve these goals, I suggest a way of dealing with methodology: *crafting*.[116] By a craft, I mean a series of steps to operationalise abstract concepts for a specific locality, which leads to hermeneutically adjust theories and research questions to the given locality.[117] Bourdieu explained this in *an Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (1992). He writes that the concept of habitus is more a method than a theory and, he wished his readers to read his *Distinction* and *State Nobility* as exercise books. This is to emphasise the significance to deliver research results by underpinning his theoretical statements with empirical evidences; in his study, theories and methods are intimately integrated via empirical specificity.[118] In this sense, contextualising my research question, with locally specific socio-cultural context makes it possible to take a locally specific logic of practices seriously while posing a theoretically formulated research question.[119] This is only way to make it possible for us to dismantle the mechanism of ongoing social situations, which is necessarily heterogeneous because of their locally specific historical processes. To note, this means that the explanatory capacity of my theory will be shown only to the case I study. In order to generalise my theory to other cases, I must also verify its applicability to a given

[115] Rehbein and Souza (2014) criticise a tendency in academic field to apply the universal theories and/or the universal methods beyond the social reality.
[116] Craft is Bourdieu (2014)'s term. Swartz (1997) introduces Bourdieu's way of dealing with methodology: *genetic structuralism.*
[117] Bourdieu (2014, pp. 92-94)
[118] Bourdieu calls this way of practicing science: *genetic structuralism*. See Swartz (1997, p. 35)
[119] Rehbein (2015, p. 94) explains that Bourdieu suggested to avoid using theories and methods for their own sake, and further argues that "every method and every theory must be adjusted for the given configuration"

cases on the empirical ground.[120] By denying its permanent explanatory power, this study will avoid exercising a symbolic domination onto the research subjects, who actually live in the constantly changing social situation outside of my fieldwork site. In addition, I will reflect on the possible implication of my research onto the on-going situation of social inequality in the process of crafting in the next chapter. In summary, to operationalise abstract concepts for a specific locality is to take logic of human practices particular to a given locality seriously. This approach seeks to make the specific characteristics of a given practice in the light of its historical dynamic explicit.[121]

Taking this approach means to maintain epistemological coherence according to practical reasons. In his lecture at Tübingen University in 2015, Charles Taylor differentiated three different types of logical coherence: (1) modern-natural scientific logic, (2) modern-social scientific logic and (3) hermeneutical logic of everyday life. He argued that the logic in use in the modern social science lacks a perception of a society as human-made, and therefore it is unfit to understand social phenomenon. Instead, he emphasised the way of thinking about the society should be matched to the thinking, which is used to build human society. Bourdieu agrees with this:

> One of the major problems in the human science is that the different logics that they use as tools (game theory, probability calculus) were constructed against everyday practical reason. To apply them to things that they were constructed against has very nice formal effects in books, but it is very destructive for the progress of science. In the social sciences, you have to be able to resist the effect of ostentatious scientificity obtained by applying products of reasoning reason to historical reasons. (Bourdieu 2014, pp. 140-141)

In this particular manner, Bourdieu's theory is able to take logic of human practices particular to a given locality seriously. The configurations of a structure of social hierarchy must be heterogeneous, however, what can be similar in different cases is its mechanism of perpetuation of such existing structures in everyday life. On this ground, I argue that Bourdieu's overarching theory maintain its explanatory power to socio-cultural context outside of French society, for example, due to my particular interest, Japanese society.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter explained why and how I consider that Bourdieu's overall theory of social inequality underpinned with habitus theory could explain social phenomenon outside of French cultural context. Bourdieu's epistemological framework integrates both objective and

[120] Rehbein and Souza (2014)
[121] Bourdieu (2014, p. 93)

subjective episteme to capture individuals as rational, wilful and strategic and at the same time bounded by social structures. This epistemological framework reduces a risk for scientific fields to discredit groups of people who do not fit to a given scientific explanation as irrational and inadequate. From this ground, I argued the criticism of Bourdieu's theory on its applicability is reasoned to be relevant to the fact that Bourdieu's scientific work does not conform to the Western traditional practice of social science, which now accepted as universal standard. Since 1980s, much effort has been put to develop a systematic methodology in the theoretical framework Bourdieu suggested. These methodological developments have been fruitful in a sense to demonstrate the applicability of Bourdieu's thought to wider cultural contexts. However, instrumentalisation of Bourdieu's theory does not necessarily result in successful elucidation of the mechanism of perpetuation of the existing structure of social hierarchy in a specific locality. On this point, I gave an example of a piecemeal appropriation from Japanese field of Bourdieu's study. Rejecting this tradition to treat theories and methods as if being a set of scientific instruments, Bourdieu emphasised the importance to practice social science *reflexively*. As a way to make my research reflexive, I suggested *crafting*. More concretely, crafting means to operationalise abstract concepts according to the historically constituted, therefore, locally specific practical knowledge of everyday life. In a sense that the existing structure of social inequality is historically constituted, therefore, locally specific; accordingly, its configuration of perpetuation must be heterogeneous. By integrating socio-cultural contexts to my research question, I can take practical sense of everyday life seriously. In addition, it will minimise the risk of producing another work of affirmative science. Here, it is important to remember that my theoretical statement can only refer to a case, which I empirically studied. This also means the validity of the study result is temporally. By increasing the number of case studies and by carrying out the follow-up case studies, the theory may be able to refer to wider context and to longer period. On this ground, I conclude Bourdieu's theory can produce relevant knowledge of social reality beyond structural differences between France and Japan not on the basis of functional similarity in the different social arrangements but based on interpretation of human being as conscious, wilful, strategic and rational actors who are not interested in satisfying the universal scientific explanation.

Chapter 5.
A Craft of Study: evolving theory into method.

5.1. Introduction

In my theoretical discussion, I reached two points to test empirically in a case study. First point is discussed in Chapter 2: the mechanism of FEO contributing to perpetuating the existing structure of social inequality, under which individuals' innate socio-cultural position is translated to different socioeconomic levels via meritocracy. This statement requires individuals to be disciplined in accord with *symbolic liberalism*. On this point, I must verify, therefore, if they perceive themselves with *punctual self*. Second point is suggested as a hypothesis in Chapter 3: according to the theory of symbolic violence, individuals should misrecognise their current social positions as direct expressions of individual achievement. These two points, in concert, constitute my research question: *Is the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO, internalised and used by "socio-culturally disadvantaged" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality?* By the fact that my overall research question derives from my theoretical discussion, my research question, at this point, remains context-less. In order to reach a research result relevant to social reality, I must reformulate my research question in accord with socio-culture of my fieldwork site as I discussed in Chapter 4. For this purpose, this chapter introduces my craft of study. First of all, I verify my theoretical statements by integrating the statistical trend in Japanese social reality and also by taking the existing empirical studies into account. I particularly discuss my choice of data to make clear how it is relevant to the focus of my study: the mechanism of perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality in a fieldwork site. Differently put, this process of operationalisation will prepare my research questions concrete and specific for my fieldwork site. After the process of operationalisation, I introduce my design of questionnaire and its designated analytical framework.

5.2. In search of the socio-culturally disadvantaged

My research aims at answering the overarching research question formulated in the theoretical discussion on the mechanism of Fair Equality of Opportunity resulting in persisting social inequality and on Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence:

RQ_1: *Is the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO, internalised and used by "socio-culturally disadvantaged" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality?*

To remind, the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO indicates a discourse of one's life constituted with the modernist idea of context-less *self*; an ideological view of life constructed in accord with *symbolic liberalism* that is a life lived by *punctual self.*

5.2.1. Statistical regularity in practice

My first task is to find the "socio-culturally disadvantaged" objectified in the meritocratic selection process. Following Bourdieu, I carried out this task statistically. I identified unintentionally created social regularities in the result of meritocratic selection of the most prestigious university in Japan, namely Tokyo University.[122] I note, my purpose of this statistical inquiry is not on finding out "who goes to Tokyo University?" but; it was to ask "who are underrepresented in the objectified 'most competent' in Japan?" Social background data of students of Tokyo University is publicly available in *the Survey of Actual Life Situation of Students of Tokyo University*, which has been carried out annually since 1950.[123] The survey results from 2000 to 2014 are available online[124]; for the older records, I visited the student office and libraries of Tokyo University as my preliminary fieldwork in summer 2014. As a result of the statistical inquiry in social background data of Tokyo University students from 1975 to 2014, I could identify two socio-cultural groups, which had been constantly underrepresented. Firstly, there is a gender bias in the selection result; females have been and still are severely underrepresented. However, the number of female students has slowly but steadily increased; this indicates that the situation of underrepresentation concerning females is improving.[125] Another significant socio-cultural bias is found regarding the remoteness of students' place of origin from its regional centre.[126]

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[122] Tokyo University is taken as an extreme case as its academic certificate exerts the highest symbolic value among all the universities in Japan.

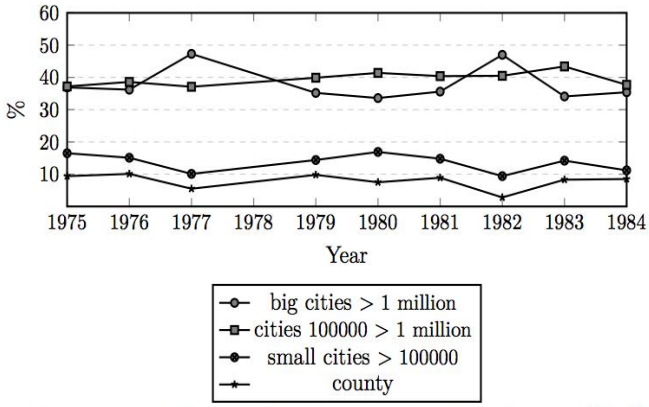
[123] With exceptions of 1952 due to a similar but different survey took place and, of 1968 due to Todai dispute, which students occupied and blockaded the University buildings as to protest against the Vietnamese war, the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the US and Japan and other political issues.

[124] The data from 2000 to 2014 is available at: http://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/stu05/h05_j.html

[125] It is empirically shown that opportunity of education has proliferated first among male school-age cohort and then among female school-age cohort. This means there are still gender differences in terms of equality of educational opportunity and also of families' investment strategy. See Sasaki (2006) and Tachibanaki (2013)

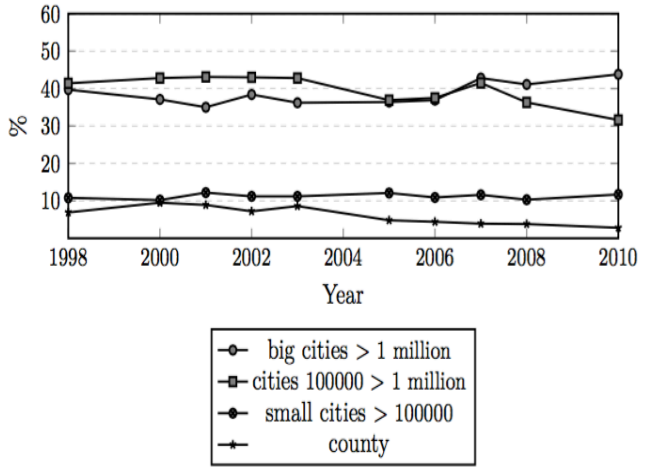
[126] To note, there is also a strong bias regarding students' place of origin in terms of prefecture. For instance, since 1975 till 2014, more than 50% of students have been born in Kanto area. In addition, the number of students from Kanto area has actually increased in the recent years. However, taking this definition will lead me to treat the rest of Japanese prefecture as a whole as *the other* of Tokyo. In this sense, I decided to focus on the data regarding students' hometown in terms of its remoteness from its regional centre.

The Remoteness of Students' Hometown from its Regional Centre (1975-1984)



Source: the Survey of Actual Life Situation of Tokyo University Students (1975-1984)
Data of 1978 is not available because any question regarding the population size of students' place of origin was not asked. Instead, the survey asked the place of origin in terms of prefectures.

The Remoteness of Students' Hometown from its Regional Centre (1998-2010)



Source: the Survey of Actual Life Situation of Tokyo University Students (1998-2010)
Data of 1999, 2004 and 2009 is not available because any question regarding the population size of students' place of origin was not asked. Instead, the survey asked the place of origin in terms of prefectures.

These graphs above show the percentages of Tokyo University students from different types of cities. The different types of cities are categorised according to its distance from the regionally most populated place. The most populated city is, by definition, the regional centre and; the county *(gunbu-郡部)* indicates an administrative area, which is most remote from the centre. As we can see in these graphs, unlike the case of females, the number of students from county, did not show much fluctuation between 1975 to 1984; and it shows a rather deteriorating trend from 2003 onwards.

Surely, some might argue that it is not worth problematising this rate of representation because the recent depopulation and aging society in rural areas might be able to explain this

trend well. On one hand, the population size of individual counties has steadily diminished. While its population size has steadily declined, the number of high-school graduates, who choose to proceed to higher education, has significantly increased in these forty-five years especially in counties, due to the transformation of industrial structure in Japan.[127] More particularly, the high school advancement rate in the depopulated areas has dramatically increased from 65.5 % in 1970 to 91.8% in 1980. In 2002, the advancement rate of students from the depopulated area has surpassed the national average.[128] However, as I mentioned before, it is not the point here to understand why and how these statistical trends occurred. The point I would like to raise here is its symbolic effect. From a perspective of Bourdieu's theoretical framework, these two statistical trends indicates, on one hand, the recognition of symbolic value of academic certificates got proliferated in rural area; on the other hand the number of people who possess "competence" has not increased at the same rate. This suggests that symbolic value of academic certificates in remote area has increased since 1975. This situation suggests not only the significance to study social inequality in Japan from a viewpoint of the urban and rural divide, but also to elucidate its perpetuation in relation to meritocracy.

Before I proceed, I would like to discuss one common feedback I received on this point from scholars of Japanese society.[129] The Japanese entrance examinations require, unlike the situation that Bourdieu studied in France, very factual knowledge. For some scholars, it seems that in Japan we should be able to regard the social selection achieved through university entrance as a just distribution of social positions based on, what Rawls calls, *the pure procedural justice* of merit. This feedback tempts me into establishing the common functions between French and Japanese educational institutions to reproduce a structure of social inequality via cultural field. However, as I argued in Chapter 4, it does not agree with my methodological approach. Establishment of functional commonality is essential in a structuralist epistemological framework to relate a theory and a method; however, it is not necessary for crafting, which operationalises abstract concepts of a given research question with locally specific logic of practice. To note, there are scholars who argue that the influence of cultural capital in Japanese academic selection has been

[127] See the official statistics (1889-2005) at: http://www.stat.go.jp/data/chouki/02.htm (Accessed 11th July, 2016) The work of Kariya (2012, p. 22-28) is useful to see this point.
[128] See the Ministry of Internal Affair and Communication: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000392823.pdf. (Accessed 11th July, 2016)
[129] I would like to thank, in alphabetical order, Dr. Elis from Köln University, Professor Kondo from Osaka University, Professor Lechevalier from EHESS and Professor Sato from Tohoku University for their feedback.

underestimated.[130] Particularly, Takeuchi (1995) argues Japanese academic certification has been given to students who are willing to abide by norms as competent. Unfortunately, I cannot get access to data to observe social background of the applicants of Tokyo University to make a comparison with the accepted students; this means I cannot verify whether there is a selection bias in the entrance examination of Tokyo University itself or it is rather an effect given rise over a long period of time. However, it is not really the point of inquiry here. The point is the fact that the enhanced social status of Tokyo University alumni is generally accepted in practice and its distribution shows socio-cultural bias statistically.

The topic of regional disparity in terms of academic achievement in Japan has been studied. However, the underrepresentation of students from remote area in the selection results of prestigious universities is tend to be explained in relation to the lack of opportunity for supplementary education in private high school and/or in clam school in countryside.[131] In this framework, it is justified that the families invest in extra curricula instruction for their children at supplementary private schools and/or at top high schools as an expression of freedom and equality. This line of thinking designates scholars to argue that the inequality of educational opportunity must be eliminated so that everyone can enjoy such freedom equally. This is indeed an important topic of study, however, my study critically sees the modernist premise: proliferation of educational opportunity will lead to an egalitarian society. What I suggest to inquire is, instead, the mechanism of FEO contributes to persisting social inequality behind urban and rural divide.

5.2.2. Neo-liberalisation in Japan

The urban-rural disparity objectified in "the most competent" students coincides with the on-going situation of urban-rural divide in the national politics. This is not surprising when we reflect upon the timing issue of FEO. The rural students are less likely to be certified as the most competent; they are less likely to get most prestigious socio-economic positions in the later stage of their life. In other words, justification and perpetuation of the urban-rural divide

[130] For example, see Kariya (1995 and 2011), Tachibanaki (2010) and Kondo (2011 and 2012)

[131] It is common argument that only the children of affluent family who can pass the entrance examination of Tokyo university, given the high percentage of private six-year secondary school graduates in the recent years. However, it was since 1990s that the graduates of private high schools surpassed the number of public high schools among the students of Tokyo University. Relate this to the fact that the socio-economic background of Tokyo University students has not shown much fluctuation since 1970s, Kariya (1995:2011) argues that academic selection of Tokyo University has long been culturally biased. See also, Tsubura and Hayashi (2000) and Kariya *et al.* (2007), Katase (2011) and Tachibanaki (2013) among many examples.

in Japan is tied to meritocracy with the idea of FEO. The urban-rural divide at the national level is not perceived as a shocking situation because its impact is absorbed at individual level through reflection upon their amount of natural attributes such as competence, effort and talent. The current government considers, in addition, the urban-rural disparity as something "natural."[132] This suggests the centrality of politics in justifying the social inequality behind the urban-rural divide. On this point, some of the critical studies, such as Watado (2007), argue that neo-liberalisation of Japanese capitalist society has advanced while keeping its mode of capitalism as a *development state.*[133] Without this much-criticised term, Chiavacci (2008 and 2010) argues that Japanese state intervention is more prominent in the sphere of domestic economic development compared to the one of social welfare.[134] What these authors' arguments agree with is the existing research on variety of models of capitalism, which argue that the characteristics of capitalist societies are heterogeneous due to the historically constituted political, economic and social institutional arrangements of a specific locality. On this basis, in order to examine whether there is a neo-liberal shift in the regional governance, I chose a series of overarching policy papers, namely *the Comprehensive Plan of National Development (1962, 1969, 1977, 1987, 1998)* and sequencing *the National Spatial Planning Act (2005)* as materials for analysis. The Japanese version of policy papers are publicly available online at the homepage of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism.[135]

The focus of my analysis is to observe a shift in how "the local *(chihô-地方)*" has been objectified in political sphere. In Bourdieu's words, this was to make apparent genesis of "the local" in the national political discourse. First of all, I analysed the power relationship between the central government and "the local community" in terms of its representation. What became apparent is that the symbolic meaning of being "the locals" has changed with every revision of the policy papers, depending on the incumbent government's economic development plan. Contrary to the recent political discussion of over representation of rural vote, this suggests that people who we may call "the locals" has never possessed adequate political power to represent its *raison d'être.* In addition to establish this underlying

[132] According to the recent account of Ishiba Shigeru, the current Minister in charge of vitalising the Local Economy in Japan. I discuss this issue later in Chapter 6.
[133] I must note that the term development-state has been criticised as it being rather political than scientific. Indeed, the term has been developed in the diplomatic relationship between U.S. and Japan.
[134] See Chiavacci (2008 and 2010)
[135] For these policy papers in Japanese, see http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudoseisaku/index.html. Only the latest policy paper, *the National Spatial Planning Act* is available in English. The document is available at: http://www.mlit.go.jp/en/kokudoseisaku/index.html.

powerlessness, I examined the political formulations of underdevelopment of the local economies show a neo-liberal shift. More particularly, I inquire if a logic of political reasoning regarding the underdevelopment of "the local communities" shows neo-liberal shift, namely from intentional injustice to symbolic violence. This analysis was done in the same way as I pointed out Modernist characteristics in Rawls' egalitarian principle: I identified removal of socio-cultural characteristics and historicity from the embodied view of individual *self*. As a result, I establish the latest regional policy namely community-building projects (CBP) as a policy of neo-liberalism.

5.2.3. Choosing a fieldwork site

For now, I empirically established the adequacy of my focus on people who grow up in the rural area. I re-formulated my research question:

RQ_2: *An ideological view of one's life situation, as being a direct result of individual achievement, internalised and used by "the locals" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality?*

The definition of rural communities in this study agrees with the one developed in the study field of geography especially in Germany: peripheralisation study. The prevalent approaches in the field of study rejects identifying rural communities simply with its geographical remoteness because such a definition regard rusticity as static and fixed; instead, the recent research conceptualise *rural communities* as a space socially constructed and endeavours to identify it with its involvement in the on-going process of *peripheralisation,* which means a gradual withdrawal from the processes of centralisation in the political, economic and social field coincided with depopulation.[136] Through this process of peripheralisation, the rural communities find itself in the gradual process of subordination to *the centre* politically, economically and socially. What I mean by a community is a social space, in which its members share one power structure constructed over time within a geographical boundary. This makes my definition of rural communities: a field of power struggle that experiences the on-going process of peripheralisation. This definition takes socio-temporal aspect of everyday life seriously; however, the existing studies of peripheralisation have not inquire how it

[136] Huning *et al.* (2012) suggested to capture rural communities in terms of socio-temporal dynamics and developed this definition in their studies of villages of the former East Germany. Elis (2011) tested this model in Japanese cases and concluded the neo-liberal policies of Koizumi administration (in office 2001-2006) resulted in a further peripheralisation.

actually works in relation to the power structure constructed within a given community. The existing field of study is still chiefly interested in identifying phenomena of peripheralisation and the impact of regional policies.[137] Precisely speaking, it is increasingly recognised that the local residents play an important role in the process of peripheralisation; however, the number of the empirical study to elucidate subjective practice in its process remains severely limited. Accordingly, theoretical elaboration on the process of peripheralisation in relation to subjective practice has not been sufficiently advanced compared to its objective mechanics. Consequently, it gives an impression that the subjects in rural area are subjected to peripheralisation process in a homogenous way. Nevertheless, in my view, how these phenomena of peripheralisation come about in social reality is locally specific because social arrangements of power in a given community have been historically constituted. Thus, the socio-cultural characteristics of a particular group of people who live in a rural community in Japan must be empirically researched and integrated to the question.

Accordingly, my next task is to select a community as my fieldwork site. In order to keep my research focus on an analysis of inequality, justified within the framework of inclusive neoliberal competition, I selected my fieldwork site from communities that have been involved in a government-led CBP. This is designated by the preliminary analysis of neo-liberalisation of Japanese politics; I identified the modernist idea of *self* in the CBPs, which functions as a political instrument of neoliberal politics. In this manner, my fieldwork site will coincide both with a political construction of "the local" expressed in the policy papers analysed and with the on-going process of peripheralisation. The latest major government-led project of the local economic vitalisation is called Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad *(chiiki okoshi kyôryoku tai –地域おこし協力隊)*[138], organised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. In 2015, there are four hundred and forty-four communities participating in the project. Regrettably, communities whose members experience obvious social exclusion must be excluded from the sample: for example communities of Korean-Japanese, stigmatised groups such as the so-called *burakumin (部落民),* criminals, and the physically challenged, among others. The mechanism of the

[137] Meyer and Miggelbrink (2013, p. 212) criticises that "semantics and the whole connection transported by them (the existing researchers) are discussed in terms of their function as cause and effect of social peripheralisation." They further pointed out that "(U)nfortunately, the connection between both – peripheralisation research as macro-process-centred field and research about mechanism of subjectivation – has not yet been undertaken."

[138] This is an official translation by the Japanese government. Henceforth, I use abbreviation: CRCS for Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad (*Chiiki Okoshi Kyôryoku Tai*).

reproduction of social inequality related to the already excluded provides me with possibilities for further research. I established contact with one community from the participants' communities through a university alumnus from the time when I took my bachelor's degree. This way of choosing a fieldwork site, firstly, made it easier for me to get around the town thanks to the trust I quickly gained from the residents through my alumni and; secondly, made my choice arbitrary.

5.2.4. Socio-culture

My contact is one of the two members of CRCS, who lived in a community called *Kuki (九鬼)* since April 2014. My research question is now specified to:

RQ_3: *An ideological view of one's life situation as being a direct result of individual achievement, internalised and used by "the residents of Kuki" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality?*

This suggests a next task to explore the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki. As my second fieldwork, I went to Kuki in July 2015 with no prior knowledge whatsoever about the town. I approached to the town in an ethnographic way. Davies (2002) introduces ethnography as a study "to explore the phenomenological reality of actors' understanding and interpretations and their effects on social structure, but not to take these interpretations as fully constitutive of social structure." Ethnographic approach is, indeed, appropriate for me to observe naturalised unequal power relationship, which everyone in Kuki is taking a part. I gathered information on the structure of social hierarchy currently in effect within Kuki from my alumnus, the residents of Kuki and Owase city officers. From their accounts, I picked up keywords, which express the unequal power relationship, and investigated how the unequal power relationship is structured and institutionalised. I synthesised information at hand and constructed a preliminary view on institutional arrangements, which structure the unequal power relationship in Kuki. The problem here was that this preliminary view was produced based on stories told by those who are comfortable to talk: the powerful in Kuki. In order to include stories of the population, who are put in the relatively lower social position according to the existing structure of social hierarchy in Kuki, I talked to females and the former residents of Kuki. At this point, I still lacked the informants who live in Kuki as the ones who find themselves at the bottom of a given hierarchy. It was incredibly difficult to find

informants, especially because social exclusion coincides clearly with spatial exclusion.[139] More concretely, the residents of those who are excluded from the institutional arrangements of power are concentrated in the west side of the town, which locates the furthest from the central part of Kuki. The existing informants recommended me not to go to "such a place" like the West side of the town, because "the people who live there are tricky". Ultimately, I visited the west side of the town to find someone who I could interview, and I managed to have two meetings. On the basis of the information I gathered, I re-constructed a structure of social inequality. In the end, I studied the structure of social inequality in the light of the existing literatures for the purpose of contextualising the fieldwork site. This is to ask whether the structural arrangement I found is particularly unique for Kuki or one of many other such arrangements, found in other areas of Japanese countryside. This question will be addressed in Chapter 7.

5.3. Research questions specified

My research question is now contextualised specific to Kuki:

RQ_4: *An ideological view of one's life situation, as being a direct result of individual achievement, internalised and used by "the residents of Kuki" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality observed?*

In order to answer this overarching question, I suggest answering following two sub research questions:

Sub-RQ 1. Who are "the motivated" in the community-building project in Kuki?

This question asks if the existing social inequality is, in fact, perpetuated in Kuki via community-building activities of CRCS. The on-going CBP in Kuki is a focal point, where residents of Kuki structured in the existing power structure and the actors in the neoliberal political project actually overlaps. Existing literature and policy papers promote an understanding of CBPs as grassroots movements, which are supposed to liberate the local communities from the conventional top-down decision making practices of the Japanese central government. This view, however, lacks a critical perspective on the fact that it is the very same central government that promotes and finances the CBP. Moreover, this view does not take into account the existing structure of social inequality within a given community. My

[139] Savage et al. (2013) showed this tendency in their study of social class in England.

fieldwork revealed that the active participants in the CBPs from Kuki are precisely those who already occupy high positions in the existing structure of social hierarchy. This means, contrary to the liberating discourse framed by the existing literature, CBPs, which are a policy instrument of neo-liberalism, benefit both the powerful stakeholders of the local community and the central government. In other words, the CBP initiative, in fact, restructure a community according to the governing discourse of neo-liberalism while perpetuating the social hierarchy constructed over time in the local community.

Sub-RQ 2. Is the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO internalised and used to justify their social position by the residents of Kuki?

The second question is to test if Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence can explain the mechanism of perpetuation of the existing social inequality. This question is formulated within the framework of Bourdieu's idea of aspiration and Sen's distinction between *capability* and *functioning*.[140] Bourdieu argues that individuals constantly adjust their aspirations to realistic levels through reflection via habitus. From Sen's perspective, this means that capability and functioning should be more or less be in tune with one another. In the sense that individuals adjust their aspirations via reflection on their chance of success and risk of failure, the existing bias in the result of social selection shows that individuals' capacity of aspire is, indeed, stratified. Due to the ideological characteristics of equality of opportunity, this bias is not noticeably visible to each individual, and leads people to believe that their lives are solely the result of their own achievements. Furthermore, it suggests that they contribute to perpetuate the existing social inequality precisely by doing their best to achieve the life they desire. In this case, the power relations between the dominant and the dominated in a society are concealed behind the logic of equality and freedom, and members of a given society misrecognise such inequality as natural. Bourdieu calls this naturalisation mechanism of social inequality *symbolic violence*.

These two questions seek to establish a relationship between objective social arrangements and subjectively internalised value. Bourdieu's theoretical framework suggests that this political struggle is fundamentally unequal because the struggle originates in the imposition of categories by the powerful. It would mean that the residents of Kuki would use the same reason, which the state uses when it deprives political power from the local

[140] Sen explains *capability* as individuals' ability to aspire the different kinds of lives within their reach, and *functioning* as the actual lived life or living situations of individuals. See Sen (2010, p. 237)

residents, onto themselves to justify their social positions within their community. My hypothesis is that the existence of social inequality in Kuki is justified because social positions are understood as being the direct result of individual achievements. If the residents of the local community justify their historically constructed social positions as their own achievement my hypothesis will be confirmed; if the residents in the local community attribute the existing power structure as a justification of their social positions, my hypothesis will be invalidated. In that case, the social injustice experienced by the residents of Kuki should be explained as a straightforward structural exclusion rather than as a case of symbolic violence. Relating my hypothesis to my research question, if one's social position is understood as being a result of individual effort and achievement, it will contribute to showing that symbolic meaning is imposed in the objective process of social selection, and that it is incorporated by the dominated themselves into their own self-perception. This is to conclude that the theoretical framework of symbolic violence can be used to explain the mechanism of justification of the existence of social inequality in Japan.

5.4. Interviews

5.4.1. Criteria of interviewees

I collected the data on subjective practices to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality with a semi-structured interview. The language used in interviews is their native language: Japanese. The criteria of interviewees are set as follows. Firstly, for the purpose of limiting my focus on social inequality in everyday life, the interviewees must reside in Kuki at the point of my research. If they do, it is not necessary for them to be born and grown up in Kuki. Secondly, the interviewees must have experienced a social selection on the basis of merit. As I argued in Chapter 2, the idea of Fair Equality of Opportunity, without specificity in its timing, functions as an indirect justification of social inequality at birth. The interviewees must have this experience to translate socio-cultural inequality at birth to different levels of socioeconomic achievement. In this manner, students were originally excluded from the study. The final educational level of interviewees can vary from junior-high school graduate to Ph.D. holder. Thirdly, it is desirable that members of the sample population have experienced domestic immigration, *i.e.* people who were born in Kuki, and moved to a big city, or one of the national strategic zones, in order to improve their educational and/or financial opportunities. In this way, it is clear that they have tried to

overcome unequal access to resources and participated in competition for socially valued goods such as academic degrees and jobs.

At first, I choose interviewees from among the regular customers of the café, which my alumnus runs as a project of community building. They have been actively participating to the CBPs. I assumed them to be politically weak, and struggling to make their life situations better. This may be true on the one hand, but it was not the whole picture. According to the institutional arrangements observed, it became apparent that the active participants of the CBPs, in fact, occupy higher positions in the social hierarchy constructed. The reason why such a bias happened was the sampling method I had used, known as *snowballing*. On the bright side, it indicates the existence of a social circle of the powerful, and that the interviewees whom I had selected were all from the same social circle. I added interviewees from those who are put in the bottom of social hierarchy to adjust this bias in my sample.

5.4.2. Design of questionnaire

With this questionnaire, I aim at providing two theoretical statements with empirical evidences: firstly, due to the ideological characteristics of equality of opportunity, individuals tend to believe that one's actual life situation as a direct result of their own achievements instead of it being strongly connected to their social positions at birth; and secondly, their aspiration is somewhat adjusted to the realistic level for their self-perceived life achievement. I designed my interview questionnaire to observe whether the residents of Kuki misrecognise their current social position in Kuki as their achievements and/or failure, and if so, in which manner. For the purpose of this study, I suggest that the narrative approach is a useful method of analysis, especially the one Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) proposed. Actually, Ricouer, who is the major scholar of narrative hermeneutics, himself criticised Rawlsian theory of justice particularly regarding universality of individuals who are placed in *the original position*. His intention for putting Rawlsian theory of justice in "the test of universality" shares a similar concern with mine:

> So it is necessary to know how to apply these universal principles to particular situations, singular individuals, and sociocultural contexts. (…) when it comes to applying the general principles of justice to cultures that have not had the same historical development as the West or when it come to applying a legal rule to particular cases. (Michel 2015, p. 59)

What is particularly useful for my purpose of study, besides Ricoeur's strong interest in the concept of justice and equality, is his concept of *time*. he proposes that we do not experience

time as a mere sequence of events and actions; instead, these events and actions hermeneutically construct meaningful totalities through acts of interpretation.[141] In this sense, instead of understanding time as linear, Ricoeur suggests conceptualising time as narratives that are unified by a plot.[142] This is to say that the narrative approach is able to capture "the meaningfully temporal nature" of human practices; in other words, the narrative approach grasps human beings as being conscious, rational and having power of will, yet at the same time as not being interested in being coherent over time. It agrees with my emphasis on the significance of time aspect of human actions. In Bourdieu's term, this approach grasps practical aspect of time; and Ricoeur calls this conception of time: *narrative time*.[143] The *narrative time* makes it possible for narrators to tell a life story — which is a set of narratives — which has a beginning and a conclusion.

Accordingly, Ricoeur conceptualised a *narrative* as a type of text that is thematically and temporally organised in the unity by means of a *plot,* and a plot as the structure of a discourse by which the narrator organises events and experiences for display.[144] Within this framework, Polkinghorne (1995) developed two ways of studying narrative. The first method is called *the analysis of narrative*. Researchers gather information for a life story and analyse its narrative in order to identify an organising plot. This method is useful for a preliminary study to establish whether interviewees understand their actual positions as being the direct result of individual achievement. The first stage of questionnaire aims at achieving this purpose. I ask them to introduce themselves, and I analyse what the interviewees consider important to introduce me. Particularly, I propose to identify the Modernist idea of *self* namely *punctual self*. When I would be able to confirm that the interviewees understand their living situations as their own achievement, I can proceed to the second stage of questionnaire: *narrative analysis*. This stage of questionnaire aims at contextualising the answer of the first part of questionnaire. This is to ask if meritocratic value plays a role in their life story. Particularly, I will investigate on which ground interviewees justifies their current living goal as adequate, by providing them with a plot to use for their storytelling —the actual life goals. According Polkinghorne (1995), a plot has three methodological functions. Firstly, a plot

[141] Agreeing with Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of time, Ricoeur argues that the understanding of time as a sequence of *now*s is not authentic view of how human beings actually experience time. See Ricoeur (1980, p. 179) and also Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 88-89)
[142] See Ricoeur (1980)
[143] Ricoeur and Pierre Bourdieu were both interested in the mechanism of the lasting disposition. I must note, however, regardless of various similarities in their interests, they have not directly influenced each other's works. See Michel (2015, Chapter. 1)
[144] Polkinghorne (1995, p. 5)

suggests the criteria of related events that the interviewees choose to introduce to a researcher; secondly, a plot helps to establish the beginning and the end of the story; and thirdly, interviewees organise their life stories so that the conclusions of their stories make sense. These functions of plot suggest that proving the actual life goals as a plot will promotes interviewees to explain how they came up with their goals and how they see it as adequate for themselves. Especially, the analysis of time-line according to which they choose, organise and present life events to contextualise their life goals reveals whether the interviewees are affected by the symbolic meaning of meritocracy. If the timeline of their self-introduction is organised in meritocratic way, I argue that the interviewees understand their actual positions as being the direct result of individual meritocratic achievement.

5.4.3. Questionnaire

The actual questionnaire I used is attached as an appendix in the end of this thesis (See Appendix B). This is a simplified version of the questionnaire developed in the multicultural research team at Humboldt University. The original questionnaire has been tested in case studies in different countries such as Brazil, Chile, Germany, India, Laos, Thailand and many others.

Chapter 6.
Neo-liberalisation in Japan

Situating community-building project in its historical context

6.1. Introduction

For the purpose of establishing the centrality of the overall urban-rural divide in Japanese state governance, this chapter has two tasks. Firstly, it aims at introducing historical continuity of the urban and rural divide embedded in the field of Japanese politics at the national level. As aforementioned, I identify rural area with the processes of peripheralisation, which is marked with a process of political, economic and social subordination to *the centre*, which coincide with depopulation.[145] This definition suggests that the rural area is not a mere geographically remote area, but rather a political, economic, social and living space, which is historically constituted. In this sense, analysis of policy papers: comprehensive national development plans, contributes to establish macro-process of ascription of "the local *(chihô)"* in the field of politics at the national level. This reveals that people who we may call "the local residents" have never possessed a sufficient political power to represent themselves with their identification in the field of national politics. At the same time, this process contributes to achieving the second task; that is to make politico-historical genesis of community-building project (CBP) apparent. This is to show CBP as the latest example of state-led economy development plan in Japan. On the basis of these two findings, I will conclude that the state-led economic development plans, including the CBP, resulted in advancing the process of peripheralisation of the rural area. Departing from this point, I will proceed to make the characteristics of modernist *self,* which is a benchmark of neo-liberal policy in this study*,* in the CBP intelligible. This leads me to establish the CBP as a political instrument of neo-liberalism.

6.2. Neo-liberalisation in Japan

Even until today, there is a deep-rooted belief that the different national political economies as well as its socio-political institutional arrangements might converge into a single model as

[145] This definition can be found in Beetz et al. (2008) and also Chiavacci (2008)

a result of globalisation of neo-liberalism, in the study branch of comparative economy.[146] On the other hand, scholars of *variety of Capitalisms* argue that the characteristics of neo-liberal capitalist societies are heterogeneous while being similar in terms of its course of direction. A number of recent scholars, such as Estevez-Abe *et al.* (2001), Boyer (2005), Lechevalier (2007), Thelen (2012) and also Antonelli *et al.* (2014) suggest that different modes of capitalism are identifiable with the different institutional arrangements. What is important in their arguments is that the dynamism of neo-liberalisation is observable within the heterogeneously arranged institutional framework in the political, cultural and social sphere. In this line of thinking, in the first place, the capitalist societies itself are heterogeneous. This heterogeneous nature of society indicates that the impact of one so-called "neo-liberal policy" necessarily differs from society to society due to its institutional context in a given society that is heterogeneous in space and time. Neo-liberalisation of the state governance will not result in universal homogenisation of institutional arrangements worldwide; neo-liberalisation occurs while keeping its framework of different modes of capitalism. This definition conceptually separates the formal idea of neo-liberalism and the social reality especially for avoiding the risk of studying social reality merely to enforce the ideological discourse of capitalist society namely *symbolic liberalism*.[147] Indeed, adopting a formal definition of neo-liberalism of the field of political science to study social realities requires us to accept assumptions of what is thinkable and what is not questionable. Such studies result in *affirmative science*.

One of the politico-economic characteristics of Japanese mode of capitalism is that the existence of strong state initiative, which is rooted in a historically constituted power relationship between the government and the people. During the Edo period (1603-1868), the Feudal ruler occupied the highest position according to the officially installed Confucian moral hierarchy, and the Meiji oligarchy (1868-1912) adopted this existing moral hierarchy at the Meiji restoration in 1868. The logic of domination, however, changed in this modernisation process. The foundation of hierarchical relationship has been translated from the one of moral into the one of intellectual competence; the relationship between the

[146] Boyer (2005) points out that the examples of Fordism, the process of globalisation and financialisation of economy have contributed to sustain the convincing power of this discourse.

[147] Antonelli *et al.* (2014) point out the possible gap between the neo-liberalisation of governance and the historically continuous institutional arrangement. They (2014, p. 21) writes: we can infer that without an early implementation of ambitious strategies of change in the economy and institutions, the economic structure can accumulate damaging effects on the sections less regulated or dealt with as residuals.

intellectual government officials and the uneducated mass.[148] This power relationship between the government and the people has persisted over time. By the Sino-Japanese war in 1894, the powerful from the feudal era had reproduced its higher socioeconomic position with a modern justification *i.e.* meritocracy.[149] So-called *tripod of power,* characterised by a close collaboration between bureaucrats, army and *zaibatsu*[150] were, in fact, dominated by the powerful of the past who certified their competence with merit. After the WW2, General Head Quarters of U.S. occupation force dissolved this arrangement of power. Nevertheless, a very similar power structure came back in use in no time; since 1950s, a new tripod of power so-called *iron triangle*– the political, administrative and business field took the state initiative. The recent literatures, regarding this new tripod of power, are sceptic to see the iron triangle to be solely responsible to lead the rapid economic growth, so-called *Japanese miracle,* in 1960s.[151] However, given the observation that elite bureaucrats, national politicians and Keiretsu business owners possessed considerable political power over the issue of economic development of Japan, the fundamental power relationship between the government and the people is unquestionable. In summary, the existence of feudal hierarchy has acquired a new justification with the logic of merit, especially for recruitment into the national ministries and higher management positions in business. Indeed, the possession of an academic title from Tokyo University has long been the necessary entry requirement.[152]

6.2.1. Welfare state or development state?

Situating itself in this politico-historical context, the neo-liberal shift of Japanese state governance has been promoted with a slogan: "freedom from authoritarian governance of bureaucracy" *(kan kara min e-官から民へ)*, which advocates power shift from the central

[148] Howland (2002) wrote that the government officials at this time considered that it is necessary to educate people before let them participate to democratic politics, "given the people's ignorance and the promise of foolish discussion."

[149] At this time, the population who could go to university has been limited to the heirs of the powerful of the feudal era, especially the former Samurai class members and the rich merchants from the feudal era. Such reproduction has been facilitated under the protection of emperor Meiji. Ohashi explains that this made the powerful in favour of imperial war. See Ohashi (1972) and Howland (2002)

[150] Zaibatsu is an industrial, financial and business conglomerate, whose shares are held by members of an extended family. Due to its economic size, it was capable of exercising a strong control over Japanese national economy. GHQ resolved it as it violated the Antimonopoly law. To note, a similar structure has been flourished after the WW2, namely *keiretsu.* Mitsui family and Mitsubishi family are example of families, which had formed Zaibatsu and later formed Keiretsu.

[151] For example, Johnson (1999), Lechevalier (2007) and Chiavacci (2008, 2011).

[152] See, Rothacher (1993) and Sugimoto (2010). Bourdieu (2004) and Hartman (2007) also agree that Tokyo University has a very similar social function to that of the ENA in France.

government to the people.[153] In countries as U.S. and U.K., the neo-liberalisation is certainly most prominent in the reorganisation of governance in the framework of welfare state; the dynamics toward the smaller government and the financial de-regulation directly means the cutbacks of the budget in social welfare. However, in the particular case of Japan, social welfare has been the realm of cooperation. Instead, Watado (2007) emphasise the specific characteristics of Japanese neo-liberalisation as a *development-state.*

A development-state, according to Chalmers Johnson (1995), is characterised with the strong state initiative to plan and coordinate economic development via policy making.[154] I briefly note that the idea of development state has been criticised in the recent literatures due to its discrepancy from social reality together with the aforementioned idea of *iron triangle*. More particularly, this concept of development-state gives an impression that Japanese economic development is totally on command of Japanese government. On this point, even Chalmers Johnson (1999), who developed the idea of development-state at the first place, calls for careful examinations for its application. What I indicate via this concept is, instead, the policies to promote a smaller government will rather directly influence the field of domestic economic development than the field of social welfare due to the particular institutional arrangement of Japanese capitalist society. Without using the idea of development state, Chiavacci (2010) similarly argues that the Japanese state intervention is more prominent in the sphere of domestic economic development than in the sphere of social welfare because the social cleavage, which has been reinforced in the Japanese political process, is the one between rural and urban, unlike the one between social classes in the Western countries.[155] This is neither to say that the social welfare arrangement does not show the sign of neo-liberalisation in Japan nor to argue that social classes do not exist in Japan. They do. However, These changes in social welfare arrangements occur more as a consequence of diversified companies practices rather than as a result of overall change in state governance.

The late 1970s witnessed the origin of the *corporate-oriented society*, which means a society in which the family and individual life both are heavily dependent on corporations in

[153] This is Nihei (2005) and Watado (2007)'s interpretation. The slogan literally means: a power shift from bureaucrats to people.
[154] I have no intention to dig up the much-used expression –Japanese model of capitalism. There are various other countries, which shares characteristics of development-state of Johnson's sense such as South-Korea, China, Thailand and Singapore.
[155] Further, Elis (forthcoming in 2016) argues that widening regional disparity has been used as a political tool to enhance party's political agenda in Japan.

terms of the job security, economic security, life-quality and skill-formation. This is due to the fact that Japanese cooperation offers a firm-based social welfare to their workers, including unemployment insurance, health insurance, pension and other fringe benefits as a mean of employment protection; firms invest in their workers to develop firm-specific skill, which is not easily transferable to the other firms.[156] The financial deregulation in 1980s diversified companies' financial practices regarding social welfare; the government's financial deregulation made it possible for firms to choose, or not to choose, to reduce their labour costs through layoff, replacement of regular workers with non-regular workers and outsourcing as in other countries.[157] During the decades-long economic recession, private companies became more and more reluctant to offer employee benefits, because the provision of employee benefits is costly.[158] The publication of influential policy paper *'"Japanese management" in the new era' (1995)* facilitated companies to limit the opportunity for obtaining social security in terms of employee benefits even further.[159] Only some of large corporations can afford and choose to provide such benefits, and even in these large corporations the number of positions to which employee benefits are attached is consistently diminishing.[160] However, Lechevalier (2007, p. 121) calls an attention to the fact that 'not all firms are equally exposed to pressure for change along particular trajectories'. In short, the neo-liberalisation of social welfare arrangements was indeed made possible by governmental financial deregulation, but the actual degree of its application differs from firm to firm.[161] Given the different levels of social protections chosen by different companies, social reality given rise with neo-liberal transformation of governance in the realm of social welfare tends to differ from firm to firm. On this ground, I argue that it seems adequate to approach neo-liberalisation from the viewpoint of development state rather than of welfare state for the

[156] See Estevez-Abe *et al*. (2001) and also Sugimoto (2010). Morioka (2011) argue that the dramatic drop of the number of strikes, in the middle of the 1970s, indicates the loss of negotiating power of workers, and the beginning of severe corporative exploitation.
[157] See Morioka (2011, p. 267), also Lechevalier (2007)
[158] See Pension Fund Association (2014): http://www.pfa.or.jp/jigyo/tokei/shisanunyo/jittai/index.html
[159] The paper distinguished between three types of labour management: (1) long-term capacity building group, (2) highly-skilled workers group, and (3) flexible employment group. Each group has specific arrangements in terms of wage, bonuses, retirement allowances, pensions, promotions and fringe benefits. All the groups had been employed as regular workers before the policy paper had its political impact. The policy paper was published by Japanese Federation of Employers Association (1995: cited in DIO 2014)
[160] In 2015, Sato, furthermore, showed that the social mobility among the regular workers, who are eligible for such firm-based social welfare and employment protection is becoming increasingly rigid. It was at the doctoral workshop at EHESS, Paris, France in 2015.
[161] On this point, works of Sato (2013) and of Lechevalier (2014) are particularly helpful.

purpose of identifying the dynamism of neo-liberalisation in case of Japanese state governance.

6.3. State construction of the rural

The overarching idea of regional policy of Japanese government is most explicit in a series of policy papers on national development plans: the National Recovery Plan (1946), five Comprehensive National Development Plans (1962, 1969, 1977, 1987, 1998), the National Spatial Plan (2008) and the actual National Resilience Plan (2015). Surely, this series of Comprehensive Plans do not have compulsive power; however, it is not just a paper tiger. It is the overarching governing discourse took shape in a specific field of domestic economic development and local governance, which makes public reasons in regional policy making in a given period explicit. This governing discourse regarding domestic economic development and local governance is meant not to contradict with other spheres of politics. I argue this by the fact that the cabinet council must approve the National Development Plans. In each revision, Japanese government has represented functions and value of "the rural area" so that it fits to the political situation and political aim of the given period.[162] Precisely for this reason, my study agrees with Chiavacci (2010)'s argument that it is inevitable for the Japanese state politics to reinforce urban-rural division permanently. In this politico-economic context, I demonstrate how the rural has been, in Bourdieu's term, "objectified in the public sphere" over time.[163] In other words, I demonstrate how the term the rural has been constructed as a political tool to pursue the overall political agenda in the political discourse at the national level.[164] This instrumentalisation of the rural as a political tool itself suggests their political subordination to the central government, which consequently reinforces the urban-rural divide at the national level.

6.3.1. Prior to the burst of economic bubble

The one of the earliest examples of political construct of the rural can be found in the National Recovery Plan, issued by the Ministry of Internal Affair in 1946.[165] In this plan, the

[162] There are several English terms, which translate Japanese terms "chihô". These are, for instance, regional, the local, the local community, the local residents, the rural, the rural area and the countryside. I would use these terms interchangeably, but they are all meant to indicate the same Japanese term.
[163] Cited from Bourdieu (2008)
[164] Bourdieu (2001) masculine domination
[165] Ito (2003)

priority of the government's economic planning for 1950s had been put on the rapid recovery from the damage of WW2 through establishment of one centre of economic growth with strong state initiative, namely Tokyo. During this period, the communities in the countryside have played a significant role to make the rapid economic development possible as the major supplier of labour force. Actually, the remote villages in the countryside had supplied workers to the urban area, especially to Tokyo, since the middle of 19th century. However, this particularly rapid domestic migration in 1950s meant the over-population in Tokyo and the depopulation in the rural villages.[166] According to Sugimoto (2010), this "skewed demographic distribution" made the rural area culturally and economically alienated. Since then, the flourishing tertiary industry in the urban area has kept attracting people to move from the economically stagnated rural area.[167] On top of the rapid and continuous depopulation, the liberation of food market to foreign competitors and also the cut of governmental subsidiary to agriculture led the local government to find it difficult to sustain its finance without the redistribution of the national revenue.[168] The financial dependency of the rural to the central government has emerged. In short, policies formulated within the framework of the National Recovery Plan introduced the rural-urban divide and it resulted in phenomenon identified as steps of peripheralisation of the local community – depopulation and political, economic, social alienation and subordination.[169]

Given the prevailing realities of the urban-rural disparity, the Japanese government launched a series of Comprehensive National Development Plan. The aim of government policy has formally shifted from the state-led recovery from the wartime to the state-led regionally balanced development of the national land.[170] However, the regionally balanced development meant, in fact, to shore up the local economy to catch up with the economically flourishing Tokyo. Concretely, the underdevelopment of the rural area has been problematised in 1962; the government promoted improvement of the basic conditions for economic development in the rural area through investment in the communication and transport infrastructures in 1969 and; the investment in the social infrastructure was added to

[166] At the peak of migration to Tokyo, 24.4000 moved to Tokyo in 1957. Though the number of migrants decreased since then, the number of immigration has surpassed the number of emigrants in Tokyo until 1967.
[167] From 1955 to 1960, the ratio of workforce in the tertiary industry surpassed the one in the primary industry. Since then, the ratio of workforce in the primary industry has experienced steady decline from 32.7% of population (1960) to 3.7% (2010). Statistic Bureau of Japan, the Ministry of Internal Affair and Communications: http://www.stat.go.jp/index.htm.
[168] Sugimoto (2010, p. 68)
[169] Beetz *et al.* (2008) and Elis (2011)
[170] Also see Ito (2003)

the project in 1977. Related to the Plan, the existence of less-favoured areas *(jôken furi chiiki –条件不利地域)*[171] –where have the less-favoured natural environment for economic development and improvement of inhabitants' standard of living, has been officially recognised. On this basis, the central government reasoned the underdevelopment of local economy as a result of the lack of investment. Hand in hand with this political reasoning, during 1970s, Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) strengthened its power base in the countryside by promoting public works, which promises allocation of budget to the local governments from the national treasury disbursement, which is known as pork barrel spending. A typical financial policy, which aims at redistribution of national revenue to the local economy, is, for instance, the Fiscal Investment and the Loan Programme *(zaisei tôyushi-財政投融資)*, local allocation tax grants *(chihô kôfuzei-地方交付税)* and reduction in central government disbursements *(kokko shishutsukin-国庫支出金)*. Such institutionalisation of mechanism to concentrate rural vote to LDP can be interpreted as the consolidation of dependency of the local government to the central government. On this ground, Chiavacci (2008 and 2010) argues this political process has reinforced the rural-urban divide through situating the rural as *the other* of the centre. In a sense this political process was consolidated as a standard practice, the rural-urban divide also has been consolidated during this period.

An Act on Comprehensive Development of Resort Areas was enacted in 1987. This act differs itself from the preceding Development Plans in a sense that it represents the local culture and rich nature of the countryside as valuable resources for tourism. In other words, the act recaptured the rural area as an attractive target of potential investment for tourism. As a result, it triggered drastic changes of rural villages into ski, golf and seaside resorts. This shift coincides with a revision of Comprehensive National Development Plan in 1987. The revised plan aimed at solving the overpopulation in Tokyo by creating multiple centres of economic growth other than Tokyo. In order to facilitate private investments in the underdeveloped area, the former PM Nakasone (in office: 1982-1987)[172] promoted significant deregulation of financial policy. Despite of the positive image assigned to its culture and nature, the Development Plan of 1987 has kept an emphasis on the importance of the

[171] Such areas are places with special soils (1952), remote islands (1953), Amami islands (1954), places with heavy snow (1962), mountain villages (1965), peninsulas (1985) and depopulated area (2000). The list of area will be found at: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/jichi_gyousei/c-gyousei/tiiki.html. Currently, there are 1718 mountain villages (2015) and 23 peninsulas (2015) enlisted as the less favoured.

[172] He was the counterpart of neoliberal politicians in the West e.g. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. Harvey (2005:2011)

investment in the rural area. This suggests the continuous correlation between the underdevelopment of rural area and the lack of investment: the urban and rural divide has also been reinforced.[173]

6.3.2. After the burst of economic bubble

After the burst of the economic bubble in the beginning of 1990, Japan suffered from the decades-long economic recession, so-called *the lost two decades.* During this period, both the national and the local governments experienced the sharp decline of tax revenue. For the national government, it became a burden to provide the local governments with financial support. At the same time, the local governments started to feel the increasing burden of the maintenance fee of public infrastructures, originally constructed with an aim of vitalising the local economy. In this politico-economic climate, Hashimoto administration (in office: 1996-1998) initiated a series of critical political reforms, which resulted in the reduction in the local financial allocation.[174] Reflecting this trend, the new National Development Plan, launched in 1998, specifically promote "economic development with regional characteristics" on the basis of "self-support and collaboration." Later, the Koizumi Cabinet (in office: 2001- 2006) took over the trend through the administrative reform namely the trinity reforms *(sanmi ittai kaikaku-三位一体改革).* This meant the continuous decline of the redistribution of national budget to the local government.[175] Similarly to the one of 1998, the National Spatial Planning Act (2005)[176] promoted to situate the local residents not as subjects who need help but as self-responsible subjects with whom collaborate.[177] This shift has been promoted with the slogan of empowerment: a power shift from bureaucrats to the people. However, these reforms did not result in substantial power shift in practice. On the contrary, the local governments, which have grew financial dependency on the central government since 1970s', found themselves under even stronger economic pressure.[178] As a result, the tendency of the political, economic and social alienation of the rural communities from the centre has deepened. On this point,

[173] Ito (2003) points out the continuity of the model of development, in which the rural area depends on the government for its economic development.
[174] One of the most critical changes was abolishment of the tie between the postal saving system and the Fiscal Investment and the Loan Programme in 1997, which resulted in the substantial cut of local financial allocation.
[175] Koizumi administration announced the drastic decrease of local allocation tax grant in 2004. In fact, the local allocation tax shows sharp decline since 1999 to 2007. For data of Mie Prefecture, in which my fieldwork site situate, see: http://www.pref.mie.lg.jp/s_kensei/yosan/index.htm
[176] The act was formulated on the basis of 5 preceding Comprehensive National Development Plan.
[177] See http://www.kokudokeikaku.go.jp/
[178] Some municipalities even faced bankruptcy *e.g.* Yûbari-city.

Elis (2011) argues that the neo-liberal reform of regional policies did not leave local communities much political possibilities but to be subordinated to the central government through municipal amalgamation[179]; in other words, it advanced peripheralisation process of the rural area.

The current PM Abe revised the National Spatial Plan as National Resilience Plan in 2015. This plan put main focus on policy making to strengthen national security though merging the political sphere of domestic economic development and of local governance.[180] Specifically, the regional policies put more emphasis on the projects of regional vitalisation *(chihô sôsei-地方創生).*[181] In this revision, the government emphasises the significance of *community building (chiiki okoshi-地域おこし)* to strengthen regionally unique characteristics for the purpose of economic vitalisation of the local communities and such activities are to be carried out by the local community voluntarily and independently.[182] Ishiba Shigeru, the current Minister in charge of vitalising the Local Economy in Japan, recently spoke of disparity between the rural and urban areas as something "natural", because every communities has an equal opportunity to compete to achieve its own position in the domestic economy.[183] This pronouncement coincides with the tenets of *Abenomics*, a series of neo-liberal policies.[184] Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad (CRCS) is one of the on-going examples of the state-led CBP launched in 2009, financed by the Ministry of Internal Affair and Communication (MIA). Though the number of participant prefecture still remains limited –seven out of forty-eight prefectures, the number of CRCS members has increased from 89 in 2009 to 1,511 in 2015.[185] PM Abe aims at increasing the number of CRCS member to 3,000 by the end of fiscal year 2016.[186] MIA suggests community building

[179] Concretely, the trinity reform of Koizumi administration contributed to a success of municipal amalgamation called the Heisei merger. It reduced the number of municipality from 3232 in 1999 to 1728 in 2010. See Elis (2011)

[180] See CAO (2016) http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/sousei/meeting/tihousousei_setumeikai/h28-01-14-siryou12.pdf (Accessed at: 27th April, 2016)

[181] There are various synonyms for such regional revitalisation projects: urban Community building *(Machi-zukuri-まちづくり)*, local community building *(Chiiki-zukuri-地域づくり)* and local activation *(Chiiki-Okoshi-地域おこし)* as such. See Cabinet Office of Japan Homepage at: http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/tiiki/. (Accessed on 13th November, 2015)

[182] http://www.mlit.go.jp/common/001100228.pdf

[183] The newspaper article is available at: http://www.bloomberg.co.jp/news/123-NIKJY96JTSEB01.html

[184] Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet (2015, February): Policy Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the 189th Session of the Diet.

[185] See MIA (2014): http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/jichi_gyousei/c-gyousei/02gyosei08_03000066.html (Accessed on 27th November, 2015)

[186] See the official statement after his visit to Tottori in June 2014:

activities are such as "product development and sales of regional specialties, local branding, PR, engaging in the agriculture, fisheries or forestry and everyday life support."[187] Its main concerns are (1) how to add value to the local economy, (2) how to add cultural value to the rural area to attract people from outside. It recaptures the local communities as having economic potential while currently being of little value and unattractive.[188] While it became obvious that CBP is the recent example of state-led economy development plan in Japan; given the politico-historical context, it is also clear that the central government has remained to be in charge of setting a framework of the economic development in the rural area via the CBP.[189] I conclude that the state-led economic development plans, including the CBP, results in advancing the process of peripheralisation of the rural area.

In this political shifts, I argue that "the local residents" have never possessed a sufficient political power, There might be objection regarding this argument, particularly because of a recent political debate on mal-apportionment of rural vote *(ippyô no kakusa-一票の格差).*[190] However, this debate of over-representation of rural vote in national politics does not say much about where the political lobbying power derives from. Is it really the rural interests, which is represented in the national politics especially in the aforementioned context of peripheralisation? In my view, it is highly dubious that it was the political interest of local residents, when we remember the Yamba water dam (*Yamba damu-八ッ場ダム*) project in Gunma prefecture. In 1952, LDP launched the public investment project for the purpose of securing a source of water supply for Kanto region. The local residents had originally protested against the plan; however, the central government settled the dispute providing compensation plans for the residents in 1980 and in 1990. As whole village would go under the water, the local residents had to abandon their home and graveyards among other examples of important social facilities. In 2009, Democratic Party Japan came to power. Under the Hatoyama administration, the central government decided to cancel the Yamba

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http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/96_abe/actions/201406/14shimane_tottori_sisatsu.html (Accessed on 27th November, 2015)

[187] See an official definition by the MIA: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000380187.pdf (Accessed on 26th November 2015)

[188] Ohno introduced Kikuchi (1999)'s argument that the government tends to evaluate "the regionally unique characteristics" from chiefly economic perspective. (Kikuchi 1999: in Ohno 2008)

[189] See a discussion on the relationship between the state and the local government in June 2015, in House of Councillors, The National Diet of Japan: http://www.sangiin.go.jp/japanese/chousakai/houkoku/dai10ki/touchikiko2015.pdf (Accessed on 1st December, 2015)

[190] For example Elis (2011) writes: Suffice to say, it does not seem appropriate to suppose a general lack of power in the case of actors from rural areas of Japan. See Christensen (July 2013) available at: http://www.palgraveconnect.com/pc/doifinder/10.1057/9781137346124.0021. (Accessed on 22nd April, 2016)

water dam project as an example of unnecessary public investment, only to re-launch the project in 2011.[191] Surely, this is only one example. Nevertheless, this example is sufficient to throw a question to the relationship between the over-representation of rural vote and the actual political power of the local residents. In addition, it is significant to remember that the neo-liberalisation is promoted with the slogan to empower local residents. If the local residents have possessed enough political power in practice to advance their political agenda, why should such a slogan attract rural vote and/or why should the central government suggests empowering the local residents? Given the inconsistency, I agree with Fisher-Tahir and Naumann (2013)'s argument that the phenomenon of peripheralisation in rural area has been instrumentalised to advance the political agenda of the central government.[192] On this basis, along with Bourdieu, I argue that the local residents have never possessed adequate political power to represent their *raison d' être* with their own identification.[193] The Japanese central government politically subordinates the local communities through the regional policies.

6.4. Mobilisation of Modernist *self*

The existing scientific works regarding grassroots localism rarely situate a given project in the wider politico-historical context. In particular case of CRCS, even when some works touch upon the historical background of the CBPs, it is simply seen as a better alternative of the state-led economic developmental policies with the large-scale public investment given the participatory aspect. It makes the existing works to celebrate the political slogan of "a power shift from bureaucrats to the people." However, if we remember the historical continuity of unequal power relationship between the state and the local residents, this sentiment of empowerment regarding the participatory characteristics of community building becomes immediately dubious.[194] This section is to examine whether the participatory aspect of the project is a strategy of the local community, which endeavours to be free from the

[191] See more detailed history at: https://www.pref.gunma.jp/06/h5210002.html

[192] The authors argue that different socio-cultural groups have been used as an indicator of development in the field of global politics of development e.g. women, the poor and the local residents of the "developing countries." Elis (forthcoming in 2016) shows the tendency of instrumentalisation of rural residents in the Japanese field of politics.

[193] Bourdieu (2008) argues that political domination occurs when a given group got deprived of political power to represent themselves with their own identification.

[194] Prior to the launch of CRCS, scholars as Nakano Toshio, Shibuya Nozomu, Nihei Norihiro and Watado Ichiro have criticised projects of community building. They argue that spontaneity is not the synonym of political freedom; the voluntary works can be used as cheap work force by the state especially in the context of neo-liberalism.

bureaucratic rule or, it is imposed by the state to mobilise people to the grassroots activities to compensate the lack of public services. I argue that it is the latter case by identifying the Modernist *self* institutionalised in the CBP.

In June 2010, the Japanese government redefined the boundaries of moral responsibility between the government and the people in *'the Declaration of New Public Commons'*.[195] Similarly to what Williams *et al.* (2014, p. 2802) showed with a British case, this document aims at redefining the citizenship by "articulating how people should not only look after themselves but engage in volunteerism, and philanthropic and civic action."[196] Particularly, the Japanese Cabinet Office explains New Public Commons (NPC) as:

> The concept … under which not only the government but also citizens, NPOs, private businesses, and other parties, with the spirit of mutual assistance, play an active role in providing services for our everyday life, such as education, childcare, community development, nursing care and welfare services.

In the Declaration, *community* is conceptualised as an entity, which mediates the common interests and benefits. Nihei (2003) argues this type of conceptualisation of community shows the liberalist characteristics originated from the works of Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859). Unlike Marxist or Durkheimian views, including the one of Bourdieu, that grasp a community as a field of power struggle, the liberalists tends to ignore constructed power structures of the past, and individually heterogeneous interests.[197] According to Giddens (1971), such liberalist formulation is made possible solely with the utilitarian view of *isolated individuals,* who is ahistorical. Particularly, Tocqueville conceptually differentiated *citizens* and *individuals*. In this formulation, the citizens are inclined to devote oneself to seek one's welfare through common interests in "good society"; on the other hand, individuals are busy satisfying his or her individually different interests. Differently put, the term: citizen, in this sense, designates people as community members that are equal and sharing the same or similar interests in a given community. Indeed, the citizens of NPC are presumed to have similarity in values regarding a social common good:

> People value the pleasure of helping others, and by generating new markets and services they allow economic activity to thrive. … People are naturally happy to help others, and people are pleased when their actions are appreciated. Under the "New Public Commons," people are perceived as independent beings, not dependent on the government. However, people are also inter-dependent, and they can work together to support each other.

[195] This concept, introduced by ex-PM Hatoyama in 2010, has been still in use by the current Abe government. The Declaration of New Public Commons (2010) of Japanese government is accessible at: http://www5.cao.go.jp/npc/pdf/declaration-english.pdf (Accessed on 27th November 2015)
[196] Williams *et al.* (2014) analyses Big Society and the Localism Act of British government, enacted in 2011, which promotes decentralisation and localism programme.
[197] Shibuya (2011) agrees on this point.

The peculiar characteristic of *people* in NPC is that they are premised to share common interests, but at the same time, they are "independent beings." Independent beings are described as self-responsible beings, in a sense that they are not depended on the government. These being, independent from the government, are supposed to be driven to help each other due to their human nature to value pleasure of helping others. Quite explicitly, the Declaration sees the citizens with virtue of self-responsibility and self-regulation; the Declaration formulates the idea of *people* in a way that the general virtue of human being nullifies their individual heterogeneity. This NPC is, indeed, the first official document that demonstrate that Japanese government explicitly requires people to identify themselves with a modernist idea of *self*, which is characterised with the lack of historicity and socio-cultural heterogeneity. In a sense that NPC is constituted with the timeless and contextless *self*, it does not conflict with an ideological working of the capitalist discourse of everyday life: *symbolic liberalism.*[198]

The imposition of such ahistorical idea of *self,* envisioned in NPC has been actually endeavoured through promotion of volunteerism in the field of education.[199] Until the 1970s, the participants of voluntary works was the ones who possess positive human qualities such as motivation, free-will and spontaneity coincided with qualities of compassion, civic sense, human dignity and so on.[200] This requirement showed a significant change since the late 1970s. The government has reinterpreted voluntary works as something, which anybody can do to learn such qualities. For instance, the use of voluntary work as a part of calculus and of individuals' evaluation has been promoted in school education; the Education White Paper of the Ministry of Education of Japan (2015) situates the voluntary work as a method of lifelong learning, which will cultivate one's spontaneity, compassion and human dignity and also personal character.[201] This suggests, in fact, that the participants do not have to possess the positive qualities at the original place to participate to the voluntary work. Such qualities will

[198] Williams *et al.* (2014) calls this idea of self of neo-liberal: *charitable self*. Higley and Pakulski (2012) points out that charitable self are, in fact, a normative vision of democratic citizens; it offers a view of the ideal citizen, however, it does not specifically explain how the vision is realisable in an actual society. According to this perspective, NPC is an ideological view of society imposed by the central government to the people.

[199] Japanese government employs the community-building project as a method to *institutionalise* NPC See CAO (2010): http://www5.cao.go.jp/npc/pdf/goverment-actions-english.pdf. (Accessed on 27th November 2015)

[200] In his series of research on voluntary works and NGO, Nihei (2002 and 2005) observes the shift of the nature of subject in the discourse of volunteers. He argues that these qualities have been emphasised especially for creating the distinction between the voluntary work and the public and social services *(hôshi katsudô-奉仕活動)* forced by the government during the wartime.

[201] See the Education White Paper at: http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpab201501/1361011_010.pdf (Accessed on 25th November 2015)

be cultivated as an effect of voluntary work.[202] Regardless of its educational effect, this mobilisation does not allow the accumulation of quality. According to the Education White Paper (2015), the opportunity for participation to the voluntary work is open for everyone at any point of time of one's life. The lack of specificity of timing suggests that the lack of human quality lingers on to the subject no matter how much voluntary works he/she participates; there is no possibility of accumulation.[203] Reflecting upon the interviews with CRCS members, its educational effect is explicit in this CBP.[204] Being felt rewarded individually, the CRCS members also emphasise the significance of their contribution to the local problems, which the local government and administration has failed to address. A gaze on social functions of their activities in terms of the neo-liberalisation is noticeably missing from the CRCS members' accounts.[205]

Rehbein and Souza (2014) argue that the lack of perspective on the power struggle tends to make unequal power relationship between the state and the citizens, which is in effect in social reality, invisible. Particularly in case of CRCS, the lack of perspective on the power struggle blinds us from grasping the political function, which individuals fulfil in relation to the political field, in practice. Charles Taylor alarms such a unreflected mobilisation embodies a great risk of the state domination over its citizens:

> In the absence of (political culture of association), each individual would stand alone against state power and those who control it, utterly powerless to deflect its course and control its impact on their lives. (Taylor 2007, p. 127-128)

In case of the contemporary Japan, it is doubtful that the participants of community building activities already possess political power to organise themselves as a political organisation. Individuals, in the first place, lack of a perspective on unequal political power relationship. Accordingly, they do not see reason to organise themselves against the state, while being organised by the state unwittingly. On this basis, I argue that the participants of grassroots community building activities as being mobilised by the state to transform local communities in accord with the neo-liberal discourse of governance.

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[202] See Nihei (2003)

[203] In Chapter 2, I demonstrated the mechanism, under which the lack of timing brings back an individual to their socio-cultural background. Confirming this theoretical observation, the socio-economic gap among the volunteer participants is, according to Nihei (2002, 2003 and 2005), increasingly widening; more and more individuals with the higher socio-economic status have taken part in the voluntary work since 1977 to 2005.

[204] The dominant majority of the interviews introduced at the official Homepage of the CRCS focuses on the member's story of self-cultivation *(seichô-成長)*, self-realisation *(jiko jitsugen-自己実現)*, finding a reason to live *(ikigai-生きがい)* and pleasure *(tanoshimi-楽しみ)* through their participation to the community building activities. See the official homepage at: http://www.iju-join.jp/chiikiokoshi/report/

[205] Recently, various authors pointed out this point. For example, see the works of Peck and Tickell (2002: cited in Williams et al. 2014), Nihei (2005), Watado (2007), Shibuya (2011) and Williams *et al.* (2014).

6.5. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated a neo-liberal shift in the overarching governing discourse, which took shape in policy papers regarding domestic economic development and local governance: the National Recovery Plan (1946), five Comprehensive National Development Plans (1962, 1969, 1977, 1987, 1998), the National Spatial Plan (2008) and the actual National Resilience Plan (2015). In these policy papers, I observed the politico-historical genesis of "the rural" as *the other* of the centre. On this basis, firstly, I argued that the field of national politics has reinforced the urban and rural divide in the overarching national development plan and; consequently, took a central role in the process of peripheralisation concerning the geographically remote communities in Japan. Secondly, I identified community-building project (CBP), particularly Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad (CRCS) as the latest example of the state-led economic development project. Given its politico-historical genesis, I argued that CBP is a policy of neoliberalism, which reinforces an unequal power relationship between the central government and the local residents.

The second part of this chapter focused on making the characteristics of neo-liberal politics in the CRCS project intelligible. This is because the existing literatures rarely situate grass-roots localism in its historical context from critical angle. Examining CRCS in relation to the recent works on voluntarism, I argued that the concept of self, embodied in CRCS is what Williams *et al.* (2014) identified as *charitable self,* which celebrates human virtue of self-responsibility and self-regulation in the local governance. According to a policy paper: Declaration of New Public Common, the concept of self, required in CRCS, embodies characteristics of Modernist *self*, which nullifies the participants' individual socio-cultural heterogeneity. This timeless and contextless self has been, in fact, promoted through volunteerism in the field of education. Since the late 1970s, the general lack of perspective on power struggle designated by the concept of Modernist *self* suggests that the CRCS members and also other participants to the grass-root activities of CBP in Japan are unknowingly fulfilling social functions to transform local communities according to the neo-liberal discourse of governance.

Chapter 7.
Socio-Culture of Kuki: Contextualising social inequality in the fieldwork site

7.1. Introduction

In the neo-liberal discourse of governance, the field of national politics justified the existence of the overall urban-rural disparity as something natural and dispatched the political issue of economic development in the local communities to the realm of self-responsibility and rationality. In this overarching political context, I intend to study the mechanism of perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality within a local community. For this purpose, this chapter introduces *socio-culture* of my fieldwork site, which is the locally specific structure of social inequality constructed over time. This is a necessary step to dismantle the mechanism, because it identifies the nature of social inequality of focus.

As a case, I selected one community from the participant communities of Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad *(chiiki okoshi kyôryoku tai-地域おこし協力隊)*. The village community I selected is called Kuki. This village has taken part in three community-building projects (CBP) since 2009. Beautiful and Tasty country project *(umashi-kuni projekuto-美味し国プロジェクト)* (2009-2010), managed by Mie prefecture, aimed at developing Mie prefecture as an attractive domestic tourist destination. The second phase was Energetic Owase city Project *(Owase-shi genki projekuto-尾鷲市元気プロジェクト),* managed by a research team from Keio University, began in 2012 and ended in 2013. In this project, the lack of cultural attractions and the lack of young people were related in a causal relationship; the community revitalisation was recapitulated as branding Kuki as a culturally attractive place to visit and/or live in. This profile of CBP fits to the aforementioned state-led economic revitalisation of local economy. In addition, throughout Kuki's history of CBPs, according to the account of the residents of Kuki, they have remained very critical toward development of their home village as a tourist destination. At this point, by the fact that they actually participated these two CBP, it seemed adequate for me to say that the residents of Kuki have lacked a political power to negotiate their political interests with the bigger political entities, similarly to the example from Yamba water dam project. According to the fact that they are one of the participant communities to the CRCS project, Kuki situates itself in the overall politico-historical current introduced in the previous chapter. In other words, my fieldwork

site coincides both with a political construction of “the rural” expressed in the policy paper analysed in the chapter 6 and with the on-going process of peripheralisation.

7.2. Kuki

Kuki-chô is a small village in Owase city in the southern part of Mie prefecture. The village is situated in an inlet on a saw-tooth coastline of Kî Peninsula. Before the construction of the railway in 1957, the villagers had used a sea-line to communicate with the neighbouring villages, because each village has been isolated from each other by land with deep primeval forests and mountains.

Map 1. Kuki in map of Japan (Map data ©2016 Google, SK telecom and ZENRIN)

The name of the village: Kuki, literally means “nine demons”. The local tradition says that mountain ascetics lived across the nine mountains of the region; the ascetics were called demons at that time, and it is believed that the town in the ninth mountain of the demon is the origin of the name of the village. In this deep mountain area, we can also find the medieval route used for pilgrimage to the Ise-Shrine registered as a world heritage.

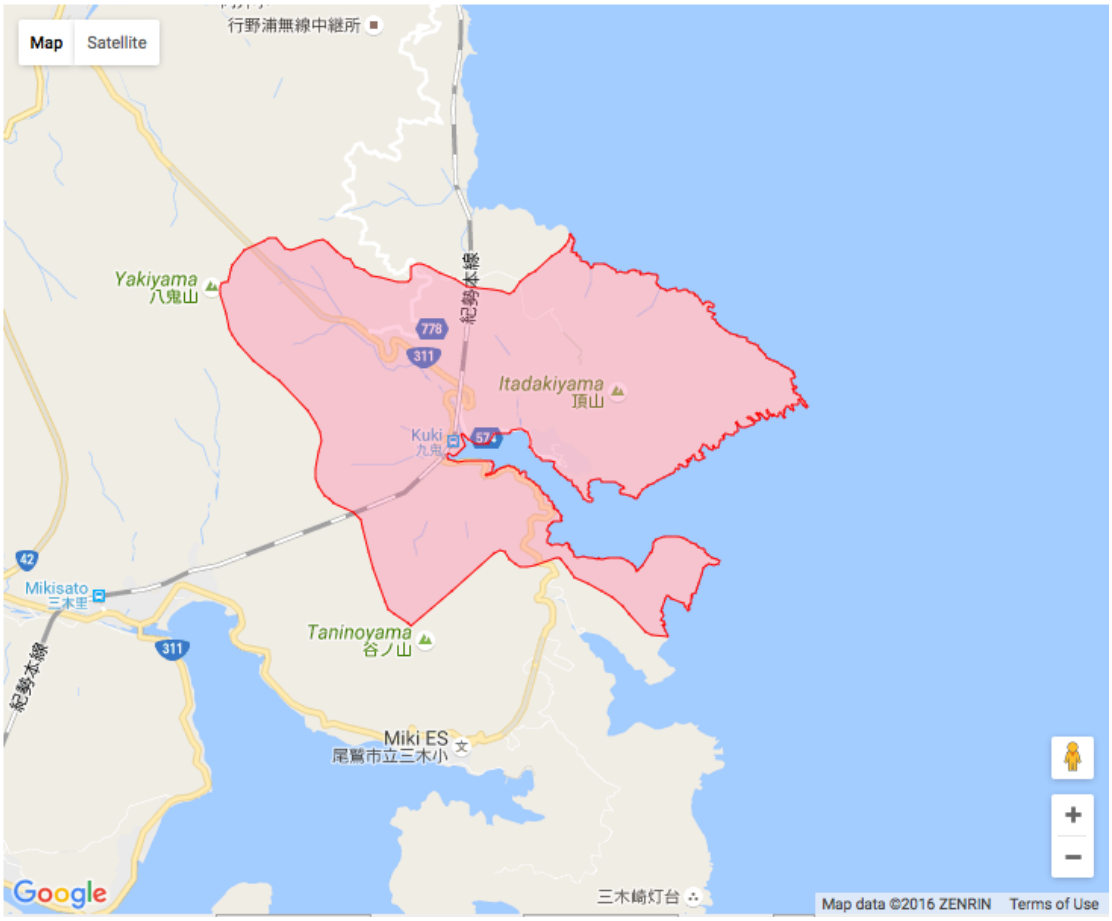
The main industry of today's Kuki is forestry of Japanese cypress and fishery. The village has especially prospered as a part of the major suppliers of charcoal during the feudal

era.[206] In addition, it has been recognised as one of the important fishing banks of Japan since 17th century as well. In 2014, its annual catch of fish, mainly the yellowtail, was 350 million yen; its annual earn accounted for 150 million yen. According to the homepage of Kuki, the number of residents was 2,150 at its peak in 1960. As it was commonly seen in the rural area in Japan since 1960s, the rapid economic growth and the urbanisation of the neighbouring big cities attracted a lot of locals to move away from Kuki to such big cities for finding better-paid white-collar jobs and more convenient living environment.[207] The result of this outmigration was severe depopulation. The central government endeavoured to overcome the stagnating economic development and depopulation through redistribution of national tax revenue via large-scale public works projects. Particularly in this region, the government invested in the construction of Meishin expressway and also the national railway connecting the villages along the coastline of Kî peninsula with big cities such as Nagoya and Osaka. However, in case of Kuki, ironically, the improvement of transportation infrastructure accelerated the tide of outmigration. Additionally, Kuki has been suffering from its aging population. Currently, 474 individuals live in Kuki and the average age of the inhabitants is sixty-seven years old.[208] Currently, Owase city as a whole is listed as one of the 896 municipalities with a high risk of disappearance in the next thirty years due to its depopulation and aging society.[209] The Japanese government recognised Kuki as one of the municipalities, where have the less-favoured natural environment for economic development and improvement of inhabitants' standard of living: a less-favoured area *(jôken furi chiiki-条件不利地域)* on account of its location in woodland in 1965, in a peninsula in 1985, and also of its depopulation in 2000.

As we can observe elsewhere in Japan, the basic social structure that underlies Kuki is mainly determined by reciprocal relationship with a strong sense of a geographical boundary. In case of Kuki, this boundary has been marked with *shishigaki (獅子垣),* which is a stone

[206] Kasahara (1985)'s detailed historical research of forestry in this region is useful.
[207] Kasahara (1985) gave an account that it has been common for people who lived in this area to work away from home, especially because of the nature of the local industry. Also see Sugimoto (2010)
[208] Owase City is also one example of such cities; the population over 65 years of age accounts for 65.6% of the total residents. http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000288546.pdf.
The data is from July 2015. For detailed statistics, see Owase City homepage at: https://www.city.owase.lg.jp/cmsfiles/contents/0000004/4231/20150401.pdf. Information regarding Kuki amounts to 44 pages.
[209] According to a report that the Japan Policy Council (2014) published, any municipality in which the percentage of females between 21~39 years of age is estimated to decrease by 50% within the next thirty years, would not be able to sustain its current population; the municipality is facing the risk of disappearance. The policy report is available at the homepage of Japan Policy Council:
http://www.policycouncil.jp/pdf/prop03/prop03_1.pdf.

made wall to prevent animals to come into the village, constructed in 16th century. This boundary designates the smaller area than the actual official municipality: Kuki-chô (See map 2.)



Map 2. Administrative ward Kuki (Map data ©2016 ZENRIN)

This unit was once called *buraku (部落),* which means a settlement or village community. In the current society, this village community is called ward *(ku-区)* due to the strong sense of discrimination connoted to the term buraku.[210] I shall discuss this issue later in this chapter. Steiner (1965: in Pekkanen 2009) differentiated ward in the rural area and the urban area according to its characteristic. In the urban area, the members of ward are bounded together simply according to the proximity of their residence; in the rural area, on the other hand, the majority of residents within a ward are relatives or members of an extended family.[211] One

[210] Buraku-min is the biggest category of socially marginalised in Japan. The number of people who are facing buraku discrimination is estimated to exceed two million. They are facing discrimination in various domains of their life e.g. employment, marriage, housing, religion etc. See Sugimoto (2010) and also the homepage of Buraku Liberation and Human Rights research institute at: http://blhrri.org/

[211] Sugimoto (2010, p. 176) pointed out that regardless of the weakening of *ie* consciousness among the young, the percentage of extended families in the rural area has been increased from 42.2 per cent in 1920 to 56.2 per cent in 1970.

ward usually consists of a group of five to twenty households bounded together *(kumi-組)* with reciprocal relationships within the neighbourhood. In Kuki's case, the majority of residents of the town belong to the extended families of the traditional families of the town, and its neighbourhood is divided into six groups with rivers and streams in the town. The number of households belongs to each group varies due to this naturally made traditional boundaries. (See Appendix C for an image of one of these boundaries in Kuki)

I suggest to grasping this structure of neighbourhood as an essential socio-culture, inherited from the feudal era in Japan.[212] There are a number of researches, which demonstrate the historical continuity of the structure of village community from the medieval time, or even older time, to the current society embodied in law, culture and social practices.[213] In this sense, the historical continuity of social structure –the reciprocal relationship within the exclusive territory, seems to be apparent.[214] However, the analysis of an aspect, which engages a neighbourhood as a basis unit of social domination in everyday life, has not been sufficiently developed.[215] This is because the stereotypical perception, which sees the rural communities with *rural idyll*, is still common in the field of social science.[216] I would like to emphasise that my argument does not aim at promoting the notion of Japanese society as being homogeneous. I only suggest the possibility of re-interpreting the social structure within the neighbourhood –the reciprocal relationship within the socially exclusive territorial boundary, as a common structure of the perpetuation of social inequality in Japan. In order to generalise this argument to other community, each case must be verified with empirical studies.

[212] Agreeing with this point, Shoji (2009) argues that the structure of village community is the fundamental social structure of political domination and governance in the contemporary Japan.
[213] Hori (1997) and Kuroki (1965) points out the legal rights assigned to the village community and *ku* are the same. Howland (2002) points out the continuity of social privileges from the feudal era to the current society. Sugimoto (2010) argues its importance in the discourse of Japanese cultural essence, and argues that the structure of village communities of the feudal era still plays significant role in the discourse of Japanese culture.
[214] Shouji (2009) and Sugimoto (2010) agree on this point.
[215] Pekkanen et al. (2014, p. 27) note that little has been studied in the discipline of political science, regardless of its political importance of the neighborhood association
[216] Elis (2011) clearly points out this point in his article. Further, Sugimoto (2010, p. 17) argues that it is because *Nihonjin-ron (日本人論):* a discourse of an essence of Japanese culture, influenced scholars to highlight the peculiarity of Japanese culture in terms of "group orientation, mutual cooperation, in-group harmony, a sense of unity with nature, egalitarianism and racial uniformity" within the social structure of village community.

7.3. Neighbourhood as a unit of social inequality

Though its origin is disputed, conventional scholars identify the origin of buraku, which is the grounding form of ward, to the medieval time.[217] According to Sugimoto (2010, p. 185), such a unit have existed at least since Sixteenth century, and institutionalised by Tokugawa feudal regime in Edo period (1603-1868).[218] I back up this claim with the historical work concerning the origin of discrimination against a particular socio-cultural group called *burakumin*; the discrimination is based on the strong linkage between lineage, social positions and place of residence originally constructed in the feudal regime.

Tokugawa feudal regime introduced four official occupation-based class –from the top, samurai warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants, and other two outcast classes –*eta(穢多)* and *hinin(非人)*.[219] These classes were hierarchically related based on their occupational importance in terms of contribution to the society; according to their occupational value to the society, daily practices, allowed for each class, were strongly regulated.[220] A sociological significance of this regulation is that it made the families of the same position in the social hierarchy to form a social space to share the same everyday practice. Vester (2003) and Savage *et al.* (2013) demonstrate people's proximity in the social hierarchy is identifiable with the similarity of their social practices in today's Western countries, such as Germany, France, England and Italy on the empirical basis. From this perspective, we can say that class distinctions have been politically installed in case of Feudal Japan.[221] This class division has been justified as an expression of the natural order of heaven by Confucius philosophers, such as Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) and Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) in the early stage of Edo period. Later, Ogyu Sorai (1666-1728) rejected this view of social class as natural and recognised the status structure was designed to sustain the social stability.[222] Regardless of this change of view in the political philosophy from the early 17th century to the 18th century, the existence of social class division and social practices according to one's social

[217] Pekkanen (2006, p. 102)
[218] Sugimoto (2010)
[219] Eta, literally means the highly contaminated, comprises workers in leather industry, butchers, low-ranking craftsman, workers in transport industry, workers in shrine and temple and as such. Hinin, literally means non-human people, comprises entertainers, the ostracised, beggars, executioners as such. For Hinin, it was possible to climb up the social ladder in the special cases. See Sugimoto (2010) and also McCormack (2013).
[220] The range of restrictions covered "social position, domicile, clothing, travel, housing, food, marriage, social interactions, occupation, expenditures, consumptions, rituals and the employment of others." See Howland (2002, p. 157) See also McCormack (2013, p. 111)
[221] In this sense, this social division actually resembles more to caste system of the former India than to the Western social class.
[222] To note, the informal shift of social status has occurred during this period, regardless of the fact that the formal right of social mobility was not acknowledged at that time. See McCormack (2013, p. 17-22)

status has remained unquestioned.[223] In this context, I argue that the linkage between lineage, a social position and a territorial boundary has been naturalised and strengthened over time during Edo period.

Particularly concerning the farmer's class, which includes fishermen and foresters, its village communities were organised on self-administrative basis at this time. The rural buraku was a collective of extended families *(ie-家)*. The villagers, who belong to extended families of the village, lived together in a community while sharing natural resources of their village as their common wealth. However, this does not mean that they lived in an egalitarian society on the basis of mutual help in harmony on the peaceful countryside as *Nihonjin-ron* promotes. One the contrary, social hierarchy among the residents of a given community was steep. McCormack (2013) observes the stratification of villagers within their estate. She writes:

> Atop the hierarchy stood village headmen, who held primary responsibility for the payment of tax, the fulfilment of corvée duties, and the maintenance of order. Normally, they came from the oldest and wealthiest families. Next came those, usually also from families of long-standing residence, with sufficient land to be allocated a direct tax burden, who counted as full members of village councils. Below them were those with small plots including members of branch houses politically subordinated to main houses, then landless tenant farmers, and those in hereditary bonded service. (McCormack 2013, p. 26)

Residents' households of a village were stratified according to their lineage and wealth. Specifically, the family genealogy was a useful tool for both the establishing villagers and the state.[224] The farmers often handed over their farmland to the state authority and reclaimed it "in exchange for protection and assurance to continue to cultivate the land"; and the state used these self-organised units in order to secure their rule. This suggests that lineage functions for households as a basis to pass state's legitimisation to monopolise their land onto the next generation. Bringing our attention back to Japanese case, even though the concept of lineage has originally important only for samurai class, the lineage had become also important for the famers class in order to justify their social positions in the constructed social hierarchy, which gives access to the land and profit.[225] Kawaguchi (2008)'s observation from Medieval China seems also adequate to explain Japanese cases.

At the Meiji restoration in 1868, the central government established a modern nation-state: the Empire of Japan. The feudal system of social rank was formally abolished; instead, the government centralised its governing function on the basis of the family registration law

[223] See McCormack (2013, p. 19)
[224] Kawaguchi (2008, p. 72) demonstrates a similar logic in a case of Medieval China.
[225] The value of lineage was officially important only for the samurai class; they were the only class, which was allowed to have family names. See Howland (2002) Also see Watanabe (1965: cited in Hori 1997)

introduced in 1871. Through this modernisation process, the symbolic value of lineage not only persisted from the feudal regime to the modern state but also strengthened. I argue so by the fact that the samurai-class's exclusive right to have family names was acknowledged to the rest of the population; everyone got officially included in the same symbolic system of lineage. The important positions in the Meiji government were occupied by members of the former samurai class; and as a result, the social structure that produce benefits, in terms of justification to monopolise the right to rule for the former samurai-class, has been applied to the rest of members of the Meiji society.[226] Besides the social discrimination and privileges, buraku as a political unit in the feudal era has been persisted from the former regime to the modern state.[227] As a part of modernisation, the Meiji government introduced the system of municipalities in 1889, and the new word: ku, which means a ward, was introduced to call the same structure as buraku.[228] This is to say that the Meiji government has used the existing informal self-governing social units as a foundation to create official administrative units. In Shouji (2009)'s term, the feudal village communities were integrated to be larger administrative units of municipalities by the Meiji government in 1889.

The village community of the feudal era was bureaucratised and integrated into the Modernist state governance. Even in the current society, ward still functions as informal, but at the same time legally recognised administrative and property units: administrative wards *(gyôsei ku-行政区)* and property ward *(zaisan ku-財産区)* in 1966.[229]

7.3.1. Property ward

In case of property ward, the development seems to be straightforward. In Feudal era, the natural resources were regarded as the common wealth of a given village; the villagers were admitted to use and/or to own the land by the feudal lords. The Meiji government (1868-1912) as well as the preceding Taisho (1912-1926) and Showa (1926-1986) government endeavoured to shift the regulations concerning the natural resources, including its ownership

[226] The abolishment of social class did not lead to the nullification of class-based social discrimination and privileges of the former feudal era. At the wake of Meiji government, the dominant majority of important social positions in politics, economy, military, media, justice, academia and any other social sectors was occupied by the former Samurai-class. Accordingly, Howland (2002, pp. 155-158) points out that social privileges of Samurai class have remained to the present day.) In similar sense, Bourdieu (2014, p. 154) points out the similarity between French revolution and Meiji restoration as "conservative revolution."

[227] Shouji (2009) also argue this point with anthropological works regarding the history of development of the village communities.

[228] Hori (1997) and Kuroki (1969)

[229] Sugimoto (2010, p. 273) describes the same unit as "the lowest reaches of the government."

and the right to use, from the feudal village to the municipalities from 1909 to 1938. However, the successful cases were minority (19.2%); the governments acquired the ownership of the property but admitted the right to monopolise the right to use the property to 45.5% of the existed buraku; 13.2% of buraku registered their common wealth to the private ownership of the representative of the community, which could be a corporate body or private person, and chose to keep using the property as the commonwealth and; 22.5% of buraku endeavoured to keep both the ownership and the right to access to their properties.[230] In sum, the governments acknowledged the right of buraku to monopolise the natural resources and the land, which has been traditionally seen as a commonwealth of buraku, in practice for the majority of the cases. This is to say that the legalisation of property ward in 1966, which aimed at capitalist transformation of the agriculture, the forestry and the fishery, did not change the structure of land ownership. On the contrary, the exclusive right to own and/or use the communal property as a traditional common wealth of the buraku was acknowledge as common *(iriaiken-入会権)*. As Hori (1997) wrote, the property right of the buraku, constructed in the feudal era and legalised in the Meiji era, and of the common admitted to property ward, in the present time, does not show much substantial difference in practice.

7.3.2. Administrative ward

Now, let us turn to see the historical development of administrative ward. In the current society, the dominant majority of administrative ward is organised as neighbourhood self-governing bodies under neighbourhood associations *(chônaikai-町内会)*.[231] According to Pekkanen (2006, p. 85), neighbourhood associations are "the most widespread of the local civil society organisations" in the present society in Japan and, the numbers of operating neighbourhood associations account for nearly 300,000.[232] He defines neighbourhood associations as "voluntary groups whose membership is drawn from a small, geographically delimited, and exclusive residential area –neighbourhood, and whose activities are multiple

[230] Kuroki (1969) Kuki belongs to the second type of property ward (13.4%), which transferred the ownership of the management organisation and monopolises the right to use the common.

[231] Except for the special administrative ward *(tokubetsu-gyôsei-ku-特別行政区)* in Tokyo e.g. Shibuya-ku and Shinjuku-ku, have their ward office, and it is officially part of the Tokyo municipal office. Outside of Tokyo 23-ku, there have been no such cases outside Tokyo. Besides this exception, Sugimoto (2010, p. 274) points out that the neighbourhood associations are also called with the different names: *ku-kai(区会), buraku-kai(部落会), han(班), chônaikai(町内会), chôkai(町会)* as such, but their functions are very similar. He only finds 7 municipals, which does not share the same structure.

[232] It suggests, regardless of being active or inactive participants, almost all the Japanese citizens belong to a neighbourhood association. See Pekkanen et al. (2014)

and are centred on that same area".[233] The characteristics of neighbourhood associations are very similar across Japan. Firstly, the unit of membership is a household, not individuals;[234] secondly, they engage in activities to maintain community functions such as cleaning parks, shrines and temples, changing the street lights, night-watch, fire prevention etc. Additionally, the neighbourhood associations are usually in charge of corresponding with ward offices, and contribute to circulating information from the local government. In other words, the local governments are in collaboration with these neighbourhood self-governing bodies to carry out their governing functions.[235] This makes a neighbourhood an officially recognised, and at the same time, informal unit of administration. When it comes to the development of the administrative function of ward, Pekkanen (2014) emphasises the significance of the continuous centrality of political interests. The Meiji, Taisho and Showa government have actively contributed to establish and to sustain the social structure of neighbourhood as a unit of administration and governance. They promoted to establish ward-associations *(ku-kai-区会)*, and promoted the self-governance within. As a result, the number of neighbourhood associations started to increase since 1920s.[236] During the wartime, the sanitary associations, which is said to be the direct groundwork of the current neighbourhood associations, were established to aid the national government to proliferate war propaganda, to carry out the sanitation programmes and also to censor each other within the neighbourhood.[237] The U.S. occupation force once abolished the sanitary associations, however, the same structure flourished again as neighbourhood associations to promote self-governance.

In fact, the political significance of the neighbourhood associations for the purpose of local governance has been increased over time.[238] As a result of municipal amalgamations, the number of official municipalities has decreased from 71,314 in 1888 to 1,718 in 2014.[239] Each municipal amalgamation drew new geographical boundaries in rural area to include more feudal village communities in one municipality. While the official governance got centralised, the number of neighbourhood associations has increased along with increasing

[233] Pekkanen (2006, p. 85) See also Sugimoto (2010, p. 272-275)
[234] Sugimoto (2010, p. 274)
[235] The Local Autonomy Act prescribes the relationship between the local government and the self-governing bodies. The Local Autonomy Act can be found at: http://law.e-gov.go.jp/htmldata/S22/S22HO067.html
[236] Pekkanen (2006)
[237] This sanitary association is called neighbourhood watch *(tonari-gumi-隣組)*. See Pekkanen et al. (2014) and Sugimoto (2010, p. 275)
[238] Sugimoto (2010) argues that the national and the local government are largely counting on the working of the neighbourhood associations in terms of mutual surveillance for maintaining the vertical political hierarchy in a society.
[239] See the steady decrease of its number at: http://www.soumu.go.jp/gapei/gapei2.html

need for securing the constructed social boundaries. Each village community remained separated according to the feudal origin social boundaries.[240] Indeed, the practice of being a part of a neighbourhood association itself nurtures the sense of trust and to be part of the social network within the neighbourhood; conversely put, choosing not to participate to neighbourhood associations risks the residents a mild ostracism from the reciprocal relationship based on the mutual trust within the community.[241] Besides it has an effect to provide a given neighbourhood association with an official legitimisation, the fact that the local government recognises only one neighbourhood association in a given neighbourhood deprives from the local residents an alternative option.[242] Sugimoto (2010) argues that this exclusiveness and ostracism as sanctions function as means of horizontal cohesion.[243] In this manner, this informal cohesion contributes to the local governance as the end part of a chain of authority. In summary, the neighbourhood associations inherit a social structure of buraku in terms of governance; it keeps households in the reciprocal relationships within the exclusive neighbourhood by means of sanctions of social ostracism and isolation. In this manner, the social structure within rural village communities constructed since the feudal era was integrated to the modern administrations and institutionalised via legalisation of administrative ward. This suggests the possibility of perpetuation of the structure of social hierarchy within the village communities along with the modernisation of the state governance.

7.4. Structure of social inequality in Kuki

By law, all the members of the administrative ward should have equal access to the common property of the ward, because it points at the same geographical area. However, in practice, the mismatch of social reality and the official administration is apparent due to the diversified characteristics of the property ward.[244] It is a very common case that the management

[240] In urban area, the Meiji government reorganised the cities for the purpose of creation of a modernised, civilised and well-ordered space. In this process, the marginalised and the poor were pushed to the periphery of the town. In a sense that the discrimination and the economic hardship were inherited from the preceding feudal era, the social boundaries of feudal era have persisted also in the urban area. See McCormack (2013, p. 115-133)

[241] In case of personal disputes, Pekkanen (2006, 2014) writes, the losers of power struggle have no choice other than simply drops out from the neighbourhood association.

[242] Pekkanen et al. (2014) argues that this fact might also provide members of neighbourhood associations "the feeling of engaging in a larger public duty." See also Sugimoto (2010)

[243] Sterner (1965: cited in Pekkanen et al. 2014) Sugimoto (2010, chapter. 10) calls this an example of "Japanese style of friendly authoritarianism."

[244] Taking the property and the administrative aspects of ward, Hori (1997) differentiate contemporary village communities into three types. Firstly, there is the village community, where all the members of administrative

organisations of the common admit the right to access to the property only to its member; its membership is exclusively given to the original families of buraku so that it perpetuates the social community of the feudal era.[245] In Kuki's case, traditional families are called *shareholders (kabunushi-株主)* and the families excluded from the right to access the common are called the Strangers *(kiryûmin-寄留民)*, which literally means people with temporary residency. This distinction is drawn between the families who have lived inside the stone made wall in 1890, and the others.[246] This socio-cultural boundary between insiders and outsiders of the living community is institutionalised as a right to be a member of the management organisation of the common. The benefit, derives from the membership, has perpetuated the unequal status between them. While such a social structure can be found elsewhere in Japanese countryside, the degree of its consolidation in Kuki is, according to Tanaka (1987), extraordinary. Kuki's extraordinary degree of consolidation owes its reason to its unique history of property ownership since the medieval time. The oldest regional record of forestry, written in 1636, documented that the afforestation started in this area at the beginning of 17th century. At that time, the peasants usually afforested and worked in mountains, which the regional lord *(daimyo-大名)* directly owned. In the rest of area in Mie, thus, the property right of the local mountains have been granted to a given local village in the process of Meiji restoration in the late 19th century. However, in case of Owase area, the regional load granted the ownership of mountains directly to the local villages already in 17th century.[247] This indicates symbolic value of lineage via property right in Kuki much higher than other cases in Japan. This makes Kuki an essential case.

7.4.1. The shareholders

After the introduction of the family registration law in 1889, one of the traditional families of Kuki: Miyazaki house, established the Cooperative *(tomodô kumiai-共同組合)* in 1890

ward have the right to access the common; in such a community, the property ward owns the common. Secondly, the village community, where only a part of the citizens of a given administrative ward have the right to access the common; the representative private or judicial person owns the property and admits the right to access the common. Finally, there are the village communities, which do not have the common.

[245] Hori (1997) introduces eleven other cases that show the social hierarchy based on the period of the time that the family resides in the village.

[246] Shimoda *et al.* (2016) introduced the official regulation to "those who own building lot, which is bigger than 12 *tsubo (坪)* (around 40 square meters), and those who live in the domicile, which is bigger than 9 *tsubo* within the stone made wall."

[247] The regional lord of Wakayama owned 183 mountain areas. The rules of ownership and usage were strict especially because it was the main source of income for Wakayama-han. Owase area only had five of these mountains, directly managed by the regional lord. Kasahara (1985)

aiming at protecting the natural resources of the community and equal distribution of profits deriving from the common among its residents.[248] The membership has been automatically given to male heirs from the households, which had the family registration in Kuki at the time of its establishment within the stonewall. Due to their possession of a membership, the male residents who belong to these traditional families are called *shareholders.* The temporary residents who did not have their family registration in Kuki at the time of its establishment, or the residents who moved into Kuki after the establishment have been excluded from its membership until the present day. The number of ordinary members who actually reside in Kuki in 2015 is 155.[249] This accounts for half of Kuki's total number of households: 289.

As a management organisation of the commonwealth of Kuki, the Cooperative owns mountains, fishing grounds and tools that are necessary for forestry and fishery; it leases tools to the fishermen's cooperative and the foresters' cooperative, which are both its subsidiary companies. In addition to the lease charge, the Cooperative owns a large amount of shares in both subsidiary companies; it gets the stockholder's dividend from these companies every year. The Cooperative returns its profit to the town in terms of financing public infrastructure, religious sites such as temples and shrines, town festivals and social welfare. In this sense, generally, every residents of the town can enjoy the profit return to the public affair. However, the member households exclusively benefit financially from the Cooperative. For example, at the individual level, one share will bring financial return equivalent to annual tuition fee of four-years university. In addition, it pays for its members' household the annual cost for having a grave in the local temple and for having the related Buddhist rituals *(danka-檀家)* fee. The cost varies depending on temples; in Kuki's case, it costs more than 500,000 yen annually.[250] This temple is open for everyone, but the people who are not member of the Cooperative must pay this fee by themselves.

Other than as the management organisation, the Cooperative also functions as the officially recognised neighbourhood association in Kuki. The significant difference between

[248] Tanaka (1987) introduces several works, which touched upon the Cooperative in Kuki such as the work of Kawaoka in 1967 and the one of Yamaoka in 1986. Unfortunately, these articles are not available online. Also Usui (1959) mentions the cooperative in his study of Japanese village communities. Most recently, Shimoda *et al.* (2016) presented its formal historical development.

[249] According to Kuki's official homepage, the total number of members is 631, including the 476 members who temporarily live outside Kuki. See Kuki's homepage at: http://kukicho.jimdo.com. According to Shimoda *et al.* (2016), the total number of member is 755 in 2015, including the 620 members who reside outside of Kuki. The number of members who live in Kuki in both source is 155.

[250] A memorial service for one person costs 500,000 yen and for each additional person costs 100,000 yen. The maintenance fee for one grave is 300,000 yen at the first year, from the second year it diminishes by 30,000 yen. The second person requires the same amount of fee. See the homepage of Kuki. http://kukicho.jimdo.com

the Cooperative and the other neighbourhood associations elsewhere is its exclusive membership. The Cooperative has steady sources of income, because of its function as the management organisation of the common. Unlike the other neighbourhood associations, which are usually financially dependent on its membership fees or governmental subsidies, the Cooperative is financially independent; it is not necessary for the Cooperative to include everyone into its membership. Other than this difference, the Cooperative shares many attributes with other neighbourhood associations found elsewhere in Japan; they engage in the community based activities such as cleaning shrine and temples, mowing the grass of the public space, organising town festivals and other local events. The membership of the Cooperative is politically significant, especially because of the tradition that its representative also holds the post of the Chef of the town *(kuchô-区長)*. When a neighbourhood association acquired a status as cooperation by law, its representative must be elected democratically; otherwise, there are no such obligations.[251] In the majority of neighbourhood association, therefore, the former leader appoints the next leader; and Kuki is one of them. On the basis of his anthropological work, Bestor (1989) observes that the decision-making process of neighbourhood associations is highly centralised, and its leader exercises a considerable political power over his neighbourhood association's members. Steiner (1965: in Pekkanen 2009) similarly observes that the small number of motivated participants negotiate policies on the basis of consensus on behalf of people. Regardless of the fact that almost every citizens of Japan belong to a neighbourhood association, the numbers of people who actively participate to community-based activities are the substantial minority.[252] In case of the Cooperative, it makes decisions on the basis of consensus among the executive members: one representative, four executives and three auditors.[253] It shows the consolidation of political power in the hand of limited number of people. Like any other neighbourhood associations, the Cooperative is also a liaison of the local government. As the Chef of the town, the head of the Cooperative decides how to spend its large financial resources and how to negotiate politically with Owase city and other political entities. Naturally, the head of the Cooperative is selected from its members. In other words, a half of Kuki's households have neither suffrage nor eligibility for election as the Chef of the town in Kuki.

[251] Pekkanen et al. (2014)
[252] Pekkanen et al. (2014, p. 30-31) shows this based on two national surveys. One survey shows that a majority of members participate to the community-based activities "sometimes" and "occasionally". Another survey shows that a dominant majority of members participate to such activities "once a month" or "a few times a year".
[253] This manner of making decision has not changed since Tanaka studied Kuki in 1987.

Besides the membership of the Cooperative, the term: shareholders, indicates a person who owns an actual share of the fishermen's cooperative established in 2003. The number of shareholders is 759 in 2003. This number includes the 631 members of the Cooperative, who reside inside and outside of Kuki, and the numbers of shares, which the Cooperative itself owns and the ones of some new comers. This means that the number of mere shareholders is not high. The company's shares are originally distributed to the members of the Cooperative; females and the strangers are, by rule, excluded from the right to own a share. In addition, shares are not available on the open market, and thus it is very rare for the newcomers to the town to be a shareholder of the fishermen's cooperative. Despite its exclusiveness, it is not entirely impossible for newcomers to own a share in the fishermen's cooperative. They can do so, for example, by joining Kuki's fishing company or by being entrusted by a previous shareholder.[254] The shareholders can benefit from the profit, which derives from fishery of Kuki. [255] Symbolically, the stocks of fishermen's cooperative certify newcomers' trustworthiness, and thus, its possession differentiates one from the Strangers. It is nevertheless very difficult for newcomers and females to obtain individual profit returns.[256] To note, even the residents of Kuki confuse the difference between of *shareholders* and shareholders. It is interesting when the definition is muddled up then the term "shareholders" designates the male hairs of traditional families: the members of the tomodô kumiai who has the stock from fishermen's cooperative.

7.4.2. The Strangers

Up to 1889, the expression kiryûmin simply and literary indicated temporary visitors to the town. They have lived outside of the geographical boundary of Kuki marked with stonewalls. Due to the family registration law introduced in 1889, the administrative ward officially included the area where the visitors have lived into Kuki-chô. Kiryûmin came to indicate, in this particular case, households who lived outside of Kuki's stonewall, which coincided with the lack of family registration in Kuki-chô. On the foundation of this administrative

[254] In his study of exclusiveness of rural villages, Usui (1959, p. 35) took Kuki as a complementary example case of a systemic exclusion against the newcomers via the right to access the commons. He shortly wrote that the fishermen, who got employed by the fishermen's cooperative and settled in Kuki, could not attain the right to join the fisherman's cooperative. This fishermen's cooperative in Usui's work must mean the current Cooperative because the current fisherman's cooperative would not have came to existence until 2003.
[255] It does not include previously mentioned Buddhist ritual fee and individuals financial return.
[256] Henceforth, I shall call the people who own the fishermen's cooperative shareholders, without emphasis. On the other hand, newcomers will never be able to become members of the Cooperative: I shall call the members of the Cooperative, *shareholders*, using italics.

difference, tomodô kumiai –the Cooperative, came into existence, and social exclusion against kiryûmin, became institutionalised. As it indicates the outsiders in Kuki, I translate kiryûmin as the Strangers. Usui (1959) mentions Kuki as an example of a village community where those who without family registration have been discriminated, and as a result, established their own quarter, called Nago, in the west section of the village. The number of immigrants from other regions of Japan who moved to Kuki increased during the 1970s; they were migrant workers in construction sector, forestry and charcoal making.[257] These migrants settled in Nago area, and the area still has many inhabitants who migrated to Kuki from elsewhere; in general, the rate of non-shareholders is very high in this area.[258]

Map 3. Two social spaces in Kuki (Imagery ©2016 Cnes/Spot Image, DigitalGlobe, Map data ©2016 ZENRIN)

McCormack (2013, p. 118) states that the separation of slum area from the rest of "regular" area of the city has been commonly marked by qualities, which symbolically express "a lack of civilisation and hygiene" such as danger, silence, darkness, filth, lack of moral, savageness, physical deformities and also different skin colours. Confirming her statement, Nago is stigmatised as poor, uneducated, violent, dangerous and, in one of the interviewee's

[257] For historical data, see Kasahara (1985) and Tanaka (1987, p. 70). According to Kashima (2006)'s account, it is very rare for the migrant workers to become fisherman in Owase city without knowing anyone who is actually working as a fisherman.

[258] Some families are related to the workers who moved there before 1960s, some in the 1960s, and some moved in much more recently. According to the residents' account, there is no family, which has lived there since 19th century.

terms, “ostracised”. When the residents of Kuki talk about their town, they mean the living community of the feudal era; the existence of the Strangers and the entire west side of the town are generally absent in their comments. When I asked people in the town about the area, they told me that they could not tell me much about the west part of the town because they rarely go there. They recommended me not to go to “such a place” because “the people who live there are tricky.”

As the Strangers cannot become members of the Cooperative, they have been politically excluded from the town autonomy. In order to overcome this political powerlessness, newcomers to the town founded an overarching association: the neighbourhood association of Kuki (henceforth Chônaikai), in 2011. This Chônaikai also shares the functions with the neighbourhood associations elsewhere including the Cooperative as a caretaking entity of the community and public services. It requires two hundred yen per month to its two hundred and twenty member households. However, the influence of Chônaikai has remained limited. This is firstly because it is not recognised as a representative of the neighbourhood by the local government; the Cooperative monopolises the representation of the neighbourhood. Secondly, it developed financial dependency to the Cooperative. Chônaikai was supposed to be financially independent from the Cooperative and its membership has been open to all residents of the town. Compared to the number of members of the Cooperative: one hundred and fifty-five, it appears that Chônaikai is larger. However, because its membership is open to everyone, many members of the Cooperative have also joined it. To give an example, the current head of the Cooperative is one of the establishing members and the first representative of Chônaikai. In fact, cross-position holding in the Cooperative and Chônaikai is a common practice. The ones who hold more than two positions explain that it cannot be helped because there is no younger people who can take positions, and other people from the same generation is not so motivated to work for the others of the town. In practice, despite its founding principle, Chônaikai is the substantial caretaker of community life, and the Cooperative functions as the decision-making and financial body. In this sense, the Cooperative overpowers Chônaikai. Some of members, who are the Strangers, left Chônaikai due to the personal dispute with *shareholder* members. For such people, there is no other alternative but to be again socially excluded and isolated.[259]

[259] Pekkanen et al. (2014) and Sugimoto (2010)

7.5. Conclusion

I suggested the continuity of the social structure of the feudal era to the current society on the basis of observation of the development of village community – from buraku to ward. Due to the strong regulation regarding everyday social practices on the basis of division of social classes formally introduced in the Feudal era (1603-1868), the tie between territorial boundaries, social class and lineage got strengthened over time. In the rural area, the farmers sought to secure their positions in the social hierarchy within their village by cooperating with the state authority. More particularly, the farmers sought the state's legitimisation to cultivate their land in exchange of securing the state's rule on the self-administrative basis. In Kuki's case, the regional lord of Wakayama region and the village community had a direct relationship. In this sense, the symbolic value of lineage, which was originally important only for the samurai class, has increased for the farmer's class in the relationship between the powerful household in the village and the regional ruler. The Meiji government used this existing informal social unit as a basis of its centralised governance and called the same unit – ward. In this manner, functions of ward as a unit of administration and as a unit of ownership of the common got bureaucratised, and as a result, integrated into the modern state politics through the introduction of the family registration law and of the system of municipality. In 1966, these two functions of ward got legally differentiated into property ward and administrative ward. These administrative reforms did not bring substantial changes into Kuki's social reality. Due to the mismatch of the social reality and the administrative rule, social structure of inequality has persisted until the present day; it is a common practice that the traditional families of the feudal era has excluded the outsiders ever since.

Kuki is a village, which shares this socio-culture with many other Japanese village communities, though its structure shows extraordinary degree of consolidation. The structure of social inequality of Kuki is constructed on the basis of distinction between insiders and outsiders of the community of the feudal era, namely *shareholders* and the Strangers. There is also a hierarchical relationship among the insiders: the households of the traditional families are more powerful than the households of the successfully integrated newcomers. The households belongs to the lineage of the traditional families have the membership of the Cooperative, which is the management organisation of the common *e.g.* forest, fishing grounds, the right to fish, the necessary tools for the forestry and the fishery, and which is also a officially recognised neighbourhood association of the town. The member households exclusively benefit from it economically, socially and politically. The successfully integrated

newcomers feel comfortable to participate to the communal activities, annual festivities and the reciprocal relationship within the village without the privileges enjoyed by the members of the Cooperative. Administratively speaking, the Strangers are official inhabitants of Kuki. However, they have been socially and spatially excluded from its community life. They live in the west section of the town divided from the town by a river. The area has been qualitatively separated from the rest of the community, as somewhere one should be reluctant to go. As they have no right to join the Cooperative, they are excluded firstly from the economical benefit, which derives from the common of the Kuki and; secondly, but not less importantly, from the political suffrage and right to vote. This structure of social inequality is Kuki has been perpetuated in mutual relationship between the central and the local government and the socio-culturally powerful residents of the community.

Chapter 8.
The Mechanism that Perpetuates the Existing Social Inequality in Kuki:

Interplay between FEO, symbolic liberalism and socio-culture

8.1. Introduction

The preceding two chapters focused on rendering the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki explicit. In concert with two preceding chapters, I sum up the existing structure of social inequality of Kuki constructed between *shareholders (kabunushi)* and the Strangers *(kiryûmin)*, institutionalised as a membership of *the Cooperative (tomodô kumiai)* situates itself behind the urban and rural disparity reinforced in the state politics of neoliberalism. In order to argue that the neo-liberal shift of governing discourse embodied in the regional policies at the national level advances with perpetuation of structure of social inequality within Kuki, I must verify two points empirically in this chapter. Firstly, is the existing structure, in fact, perpetuated? And; secondly, do residents of Kuku use the idea of modernist *self* to justify their social positions? On the basis of my argument that the on-going community-building project (CBP) – Community-Reactivating Cooperator Squad (CRCS) is the focal point where the neo-liberal governance and the local residents fall in complicity, this chapter delivers answers to my research questions in this particular politico-historical context. I remind you that my overarching research question is:

RQ: *Is an ideological view of one's life situation as being a direct result of individual achievement, internalised and used by "the residents of Kuki" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality observed?*

This research question consists of two sub-questions:
Sub-RQ 1. Who are "the motivated" in community-building projects in Kuki?
Sub-RQ 2. Is the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO internalised and used to justify positions within society by the residents of Kuki?

My answer to sub-RQ 1 is framed in relation to the existing structure of social inequality that I presented in Chapter 7, and to the accounts given by the interviewees regarding the CBP. The answer to sub-RQ 2 is the result of an analysis of the narratives, and my narrative analysis of the interviews.

8.2. "The motivated" actors in Kuki

The CBP in Kuki have functioned as a field of power struggle among different "motivated" actors. From outside Kuki, we can note that powerful political actors, such as national and local politicians, central and local government officials, and a group of scholars and students financed by the Japanese central government, at different times, have played roles in CBP since 2009. In Kuki itself, almost every resident of the town has experienced participating in the CBP, as an activity of a neighbourhood association of Kuki, or Chônaikai. These activities have been planed, scheduled and organised by roughly eight to ten of the most "motivated" figures. In this sense, these core players exercise considerable power over the rest of participants in Kuki. In the following pages I will show who "the motivated" are and how they relate to the existing structure of social inequality that has been constructed over a long period of time in Kuki. This section aims at examining whether the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki has been and is being, in fact, perpetuated via the current CBP.

8.2.1. Participants from outside

Currently, there are two members of the CRCS residing in Kuki. One is a thirty years old male, and he is in charge of running the only eating-place, or more specifically café, in the town. This space functions not only as an important meeting place for the residents of Kuki and for visitors from outside, but also as an event space for concerts and lecture meetings. The reason is that the community centre in Kuki is currently closed due to the severe depopulation. Meetings concerning CBP in Kuki often take place in this café. He works closely with the "motivated" residents of Kuki in running this café. The other CRCS member is a thirty five years old female, and she is in charge of facilitating domestic migration from other areas of Japan to Kuki. Her place of work is at the Owase city Office, and she commutes there, taking roughly thirty minutes, everyday. Practically speaking, she registers empty houses in Kuki that are available for rental, and creates a platform of local job offers. Both the CRCS members come from Tokyo, and both are employed by Owase City with financing from the Ministry of Internal Affair and Communication. From the local government, the officers from the mayor's office of Owase City interact directly with the Kuki CRCS project. Owase city recognises the Cooperative, or *tomodô kumiai* as the official neighbourhood association for Kuki, rather than Chônaikai. This recognition results in Owase

City working closely together with the CRCS members and the head of the Cooperative, who serves as the official representative for Kuki concerning all the preceding CBP.

8.2.2. "The motivated" from Kuki

Currently there are eight residents of Kuki who are in charge of the decision-making, planning and organisation of all community-building activities, and who interact with the local government and the members of CRCS. More specifically, seven board members of the Cooperative decide how to allocate the financial resources of Kuki for activities undertaken by the CRCS, and on the basis of this financial plan three board members of a Chônaikai plan how to carry out the activities in practice, *i.e.* in terms of processes and schedules. The ordinary members of Chônaikai implement the activities. In this sense, Kuki's Chônaikai has hitherto been the principal working basis for CBP in Kuki and almost every resident in Kuki has participated in some way in the CBP organised by Chônaikai. It is worth noting that two board members of the Cooperative concurrently hold positions as board members of Chônaikai, bring the membership to eight in total.

In line with what Bourdieu (1990) proposed, the eight central figures active in the CRCS in Kuki do not have any intention of exercising power over the other residents for the simple purpose of domination. Actually, they perceive themselves as being the only capable individuals *(jinzai-人材)* who have the interest *(yûshi-有志)* and motivation *(yaruki ga aru-やる気がある)* to achieve something for the people in Kuki. Due to what they consider to be a general lack of capable people, they consider it necessary for they themselves to take on multiple positions in the Cooperative and Chônaikai, simultaneously. At the same time, they identify the point that the obstacles to community building lie within Kuki itself. From their point of view, the other residents in Kuki appear to be reluctant to participate in community-building activities because they are, variously, unmotivated *(yaruki ga nai-やる気がない)*, uninterested *(kyômi ga nai-興味が無い)*, conservative *(hoshuteki-保守的)* and stupid *(atama ga warui-頭が悪い)*. Assuming a general indifference and incompetence on the part of the other residents in Kuki, they perceive it as their responsibility to orchestrate the rest of residents to take part in community building activities. Yet despite their current perception of themselves as the only individuals with sufficient motivation, interest and competence, these central figures did not originally entertain any interest in being part of the community building process. One interviewee stated:

> Interviewer: What made you wish to do things for Kuki?
> Interviewee B: I never imagined doing things like what I have been doing lately. Not at all! I am retired, so I would receive my pension, I would garden and grow vegetables, and I wanted to live a peaceful life. And then the former Chef of Kuki, I guess, (asked me) "Hey, you, can you at least be a board member (of the Cooperative)?" And I said "Yes, yes", without thinking a lot about it. That is the reason why… I am retired, and I wanted to do gardening. I wanted to eat whenever I get hungry and I wanted to sleep whenever I get sleepy.

Another Interviewee provided a similar account,

> Interviewee C: When I moved back (to Kuki), I met my classmate (who is, interviewee D) by chance. And he asked me "Hey, can you be a group leader for one constituency of the neighbourhood?" and I accepted it without thinking a lot about it. He tricked me into it.
> Interviewer: Other people told me similar things.
> Interviewee C: Right? I don't want to do things like this. Not at all! I don't want to do this, but I must do it because of my positions. I wanted to spend a relaxing time when I came back to Kuki because I have been working at a company all my life.

The other interviewees similarly stated that former or current members recruited them into the Cooperative and/or Kuki's Chônaikai, and this led them to become actively involved in CBP. In other words, former or current power holders recruited them into the circle of power. In short, a small number of people who occupy the highest social positions in the two neighbourhood associations have run and still run the CBPs.

8.2.3. Socio-cultural characteristics of "the motivated"

Let us proceed now to examine the socio-cultural characteristics of "the motivated" in Kuki. Any analysis that focuses solely on the eight central figures risks providing a overly simplistic picture of political domination in Kuki, i.e. that members of the Cooperative dominate members of Chônaikai. It is not only overly simplistic but also too functional a view of the relationship. Firstly, it is simplistic because these two organisations are not straightforwardly hierarchically related in practice — their memberships overlap. Secondly, taking a functional approach to examine the roles played by the Cooperative and Chônaikai will not help us in elucidating the actual mechanisms that perpetuate social inequality in Kuki through the CBPs. In order to avoid the risk of over-simplification and examine how the constructed structure of social inequality in Kuki fulfils its function of domination in everyday life through the CRCS project, I carried out interviews with residents with different degrees of involvement in CBPs. The following table displays the various positions held by the interviewees:

Interviewee A:	Member of the Fishermen's cooperative
	Member of the Cooperative
	Member of Chônaikai

Interviewee B: Town Chief, i.e. Head of the Cooperative (Board member of the Cooperative)
Former head of Chônaikai
Member of Chônaikai
Interviewee C: Head of the Youth Association
Vice-head of Chônaikai
Representative of 4th constituency (of Chônaikai)
Member of Chônaikai
Interviewee D: Board member of the Cooperative
Vice-head of Chônaikai
Member of Chônaikai
Interviewee E: Member of Forester's cooperative
Board member of the Cooperative
Representative of 2nd constituency (of Chônaikai)
Member of Chônaikai
Interviewee F: No current position (However, former member of Chônaikai)
Interviewee G: Member of Fishermen's cooperative
Member of Chônaikai

As I previously mentioned, board members of the Cooperative and Chônaikai: Interviewee B, C, D and E exclusively claim their competences and interests. According to the socio-culture of Kuki, which consists of *shareholders,* shareholders and the Strangers, the interviewees can be categorised into three power ranks.

Interviewee A: *Shareholder*
Interviewee B: *Shareholder (board member)*
Interviewee C: The Stranger
Interviewee D: *Shareholder (board member)*
Interviewee E: *Shareholder (board member)*
Interviewee F: The Stranger
Interviewee G: Shareholder

It is important to note that there is a clear distinction between being a board member of the Cooperative and being a general member of the Cooperative. Interviewees A, B, C, D and E were all born in Kuki. All of them, except for interviewee C, belong to traditional families; they are *shareholders*. Among these them, interviewees B, D and E contribute to the CRCS project as decision makers. Only interviewee A does not hold a position as a board member in the Cooperative. Interviewee A told me that he has a strong desire to be involved in the CBP more actively, but he participates in the CRCS project only when Chônaikai asks him. So, in practice, he participates in the project as a member of Chônaikai. Being a board member of the Cooperative automatically brings participation in the decision-making process, but general membership of the Cooperative in itself does not enhance its holder's degree of involvement.

Interviewees F and G are not originally from Kuki, and consequently they are not eligible to become members of the Cooperative. Even though he was born in Kuki interviewee C is not eligible to become a member of the Cooperative. This is because his

mother is from Kuki, but his father was one of the Strangers. These qualifications of origin and birth should mean that interviewees C, F and G are all Strangers. However, because interviewee G works as a fisherman in the fishermen's cooperative, he owns a share of fishermen's cooperative, and thus he has the status of shareholder. Lack of general membership in the Cooperative does not prevent someone from participating in community-building activities. In fact, such individuals have a similar level of involvement as general members of the Cooperative because they are uniformly treated as being general members of Chônaikai. For instance, interviewee G takes part in the community-building activities occasionally as an activity of the neighbour association. This is the same situation as interviewee A. Interviewee F was one of the founding members of Chônaikai, but he does not belong to it anymore. He explains:

> There are a lot of people who want to leave Chônaikai. They say it is the same (as the Cooperative). The Strangers joined Chônaikai to become equal (as *shareholders* and shareholders), but.., It became like, 'Isn't it the same?' 'Chônaikai does the same things as the Cooperative.' I joined because I didn't want to do things in the way that the Cooperative does things, but in the end, I had no choice but to quit. (…) Actually, Interviewee B came up with the idea to make a neighbourhood association. My idea was to create a neighbourhood self-governing body, which has equal political power (compared to the Cooperative). And I did it. But the members of the Cooperative gradually started to dislike it. (Interviewee F)

Currently, interviewee F is distancing himself from CBP as a whole, because of his disagreement with the *shareholders.* In practice, he is not eligible to take a part in the CRCS project because he is no longer a member of Chônaikai. Anyone who is not a member of Chônaikai loses access to the working ground. Rather than losing right to participate, it makes one reluctant to show up to the activities. Despite his socio-cultural characteristics as one of the Strangers, interviewee C has played an active role in the CBPs as a vice-head of Chônaikai. In this sense, being a board member of Chônaikai surpasses the power held by a general member of the Cooperative. However, he still feels the limit of his influence because of his absence of status within the Cooperative:

> I cannot buy shares from the fishermen's cooperative. If I want to buy, they (the fishermen's cooperative) want me to be on a fishing boat. For two or three years, then "we will sell a shares to you." It costs only, like, 50,000 yen. I would buy as much shares, as they want me to buy. But I cannot. You know the Cooperative, right? I cannot be a member, because I am an outsider. (…) Outsiders remain, after all, outsiders. We do not have voice without a *share*. The important meetings of Kuki, which are held by *shareholders,* I want to be a part of it, but I cannot. (Interviewee C)

Lack of general membership of the Cooperative automatically prevents him from being a board member of the Cooperative. His involvement is, therefore, limited when compared to

interviewee B, D and E. Similarly to interviewee F, he is aware that this limitation derives from his socio-cultural characteristic as a Stranger.

To sum up, the seven heirs of traditional families in Kuki dominate decision-making regarding the finances and management of the CRCS project. The Strangers and shareholders are excluded from the right to be candidates in this decision-making group. As former or actual board members appoint their successors, they form an exclusive power group. On the other hand, board members of Chônaikai can be selected from any socio-cultural group: *shareholders,* shareholders and the Strangers. Practically speaking, residents who are trusted by former board members of the Cooperative and/or Chônaikai will be appointed. General membership of the Cooperative and Chônaikai do not influence their level of involvement. However, general membership of the Cooperative qualifies its holder to be a part of the power circle. This has the effect of rendering Chônaikai less influential when compared to the Cooperative as a whole. Without membership in the Cooperative and/or Chônaikai, one does not have an official ground to be a part of the community-building activities as a whole. In this sense, the Strangers are the most vulnerable group of residents because they are uncomfortable with the structure of Chônaikai dominated by members of the Cooperative.

8.2.4. Conclusion on Sub-RQ 1

This section revealed that, in general, a resident's position in the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki defines the limit for that individual's involvement in community-building activities. The seven board memberships of the Cooperative, which are allotted exclusively to the heirs of traditional families from Kuki, function as the necessary credentials for becoming one of the most powerful actors in the CBP in Kuki. The three board memberships of Chônaikai function as signs of trust bestowed by those who were formerly or are currently powerful. Given the manner of board member selection — the personal appointment of successors by actual or former board members — I argue that the structure of social inequality in Kuki has become perpetuated. Among traditional families — *shareholders* and shareholders from trusted families — this domination is not recognised in terms of socio-culture *per se*. The logic of domination is misrecognised as being one of individual motivation, interest, and competence. From the perspective of the Strangers, the logic of domination is recognised as being designated by Kuki's socio-culture: they perceive themselves as socially excluded. In short, the positions of CBP in today's Kuki is determined

by the existing structure of social inequality, but the logic of domination is misrecognised among the socially included.

When it comes to the contribution of actors from outside Kuki, CRCS members work closely together with the eight central figures. Similarly, the local government recognises the Cooperative as the *official* neighbourhood association in Kuki, and consequently consolidates its politically superior position compared to Chônaikai. In the sense that these two parties from outside Kuki unwittingly take advantage of the socio-culturally constructed structure of the town, they contribute to maintaining the structure of social inequality via the CBP in Kuki.

8.3. Symbolic idea of self and life internalised

"The motivated" from Kuki, the officers from the city office and the CRCS member jointly perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality via the CBP. In this section, I examine whether the symbolic idea of life embedded in the idea of FEO is internalised and used by residents in Kuki to justify their positions, and hence to naturalise the existence of social inequality.

8.3.1. Symbolic idea of self and life

In my interviews, I asked my interviewees to introduce themselves and their current dreams. Thereafter I asked them how their dreams turned out, in order to be able analyse the narrative plots they used to frame their life stories. We can consider a plot as the structure of a story by which a narrator organises personal experiences for display — it creates the beginning and the end to the story, and provides coherence to the narrator's selection of events. The focus of analysis is what the interviewees considered to be of importance to introduce to me from their lives, and how the timeline of their life stories is organised. If interviewees were influenced by a symbolic idea of self, constituted in the contemporary capitalist society — namely, the *punctual self* — the narrator would place significance on describing himself as a self-disciplined labourer, someone who is in charge of his own life choices. If he were touched by a symbolic value of FEO, which acts as the foundation of egalitarianism in the contemporary Japanese society, he would express a belief in his current position as a being the direct result of his own individual achievements. If the timeline of a self-introduction is organised in a

meritocratic way, I suggest that the interviewee understands his actual position as being the direct result of individual meritocratic achievements.

My interview results were as follows. All the interviewees, with the exception of interviewee F, introduced themselves with the sort of information required in a standard curriculum vita, i.e. name, age, brief educational background, and career path. Regarding their current living situations, they told me their current jobs or positions in the Cooperative and/or neighbourhood association. In other words, they presented themselves as active labourers. This indicates that "being active as a labourer" plays an important role in their perception of the self. Their life goals are adjusted to a realistic level as they are linked to their current jobs or positions. The starting point of the story varies depending on the interviewee, but always relates to schooling i.e. elementary school, junior high school and high school. Each interviewee organised the timeline of his life story since in a meritocratic and socioeconomic way; their life stories were uniformly stories of job changes and career development. They are clearly affected by a symbolic idea of the capitalist self.

I have to omit Interviewee F from this analysis, because he declined to introduce himself, not wishing to be counted as a resident of Kuki. What I can deduce from his unwillingness to provide information is that he considers himself to be a total outsider who has nothing to do with Kuki. He grew up in Osaka, moved to Kuki thirteen years ago, and just has a house with his wife in Kuki. Concerning any symbolic idea of the self, I do not have sufficient data. In practice, this shows that he tries to exclude himself from the existing social hierarchy constructed in Kuki. Regardless of his effort, he recognises his lower socio-cultural position in Kuki. While being a total outsider, he asks himself whether it is ethically good or bad to make people realise the existence of social inequality when they are hitherto totally unaware of it. As he does not mind at all, in his own words, "being ostracised", he considers that it is not his concern to change how Kuki's everyday life has always been.

My interviews with interviewees A, B, C, D and G show that they internalised the symbolic of idea of life embedded in FEO. Each of them considered himself as the person responsible for his life choices and job changes. They had thought of their futures and succeeded in realising each step of their individual developments. Similarly to what Rehbein and Souza (2014) empirically observed in Germany, this shows that they express themselves as responsible, conscious, disciplined and in charge of their life situations. This finding shows that they consider their life situations as being the result of their achievements. All of them show that they internalised the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO. Given the fact that

they structured their life stories according to job changes and then contextualise their current life goals, I argue that the interviewees consider that their current life goals are extensions of their career paths. Connecting this result to the fact that they organise the timeline of their life story in a meritocratic and socioeconomic way, I conclude here that interviewees A, B, C, D, E and G consider their life situations as being the direct results of their meritocratic achievements, and that they situate their current aspirations on an extension of this line of achievements. A summary of the interview transcripts can be found in the end of this paper as an appendix (See Appendix D)

8.3.2. Justification of position

The analysis of narrative and narrative analysis in the interview transcripts showed that interviewees A, B, C, D, E and G internalised the symbolic idea of life embedded in FEO. Here, I proceed to ask: to what extent is this symbolic idea of life used so as to justify their current social positions, or do the interviewees instead attribute their social positions in Kuki to their socio-cultural characteristics at birth? As we have already seen in the previous section, the limitation on an individual's involvement in community-building activities is strongly influenced by individuals' socio-cultural characteristics. *Shareholders* and shareholders misrecognise the way in which central positions are distributed, attributing it to deriving from their motivation and competence. On the other hand, the Strangers consider that they are excluded from the power. Regardless of their understanding of their position in the social hierarchy of Kuki, do they justify their position as being a result of their own achievements and choices?

We have already seen in the previous section that those who occupy the central positions in the CRCS project — interviewees B, D and E — justify their possession of socially powerful positions in Kuki on the basis of their motivation and competence. Other participants also use the same logic of the justification of power. Interviewee C does not approve of his relatively lower position compared to B, D and E, due to his socio-cultural characteristic as Strangers, but at the same time legitimises his relatively higher social position compared to the rest of residents on account of his higher competence. Interviewee A is not currently taking an active role in the CRCS project even though he has the motivation to do so. He explains it is because nobody would take his opinion seriously, and he thinks that this is because his business failed once, and he has a lot of enemies in the town. In his view,

his lack of position on the board of the Cooperative is not directly related to his impression that "no one takes (his) opinion seriously", but to his own lack of competence. Interviewee F justifies his self-exclusion from the community life of Kuki as being his own choice. He explains that he does not want to be part of the existing hierarchy of Kuki, which is, in his eyes, "hereditary", "patriarchal", "discriminatory" and "making (him) feel sick", especially after he became disappointed in the residents of Kuki due to his failed attempt to create a neighbourhood association providing a ground for equality between the Strangers and other residents. He denies any belief in the competence of the residents, due to his claim of his own competence. Interviewee G accepts his position in the social hierarchy of Kuki as a result of his own incompetence. He justifies it saying that "he is the one to blame for everything." In short, everyone justifies their current social position in Kuki as deriving from differences in individual competence.

8.3.3 Conclusion on Sub-RQ 2

In this chapter, I introduced a result of my *analysis of narrative* and *narrative analysis* of my interviewees' life stories. It revealed that "being an active labour" plays a significant role in the idea of self for everyone, except interviewee F. On this basis, I argue that they are disciplined to perceive themselves in accord with the symbolic idea of the self, imposed in capitalist society — *i.e. the punctual self.* When it comes to the timeline of their life stories, they organised them following a meritocratic and socio-economic model. The starting point for each interviewee's life story was always related to his schooling in childhood or in youth. Thereafter, they displayed their life stories uniformly as a succession of job changes and career developments. Telling their stories, they presented themselves as responsible, conscious, disciplined, and in charge of their life situations. They situated their current life goals and dreams as extensions to the histories of their job changes and career developments. In this manner, their life situations and aspirations are totally in tune with one another at a realistic and adequate level. In short, they view their current life situations as being a direct result of their individual achievements, and they perceive their social positions in Kuki as justifiable and legitimised with regard with their self-perceptions of the meritocratic competences they have achieved.

8.4. Research questions answered

In my answer to my first sub-research question, I show that the existing structure of social inequality plays a significant role in setting limits for the involvement of residents in the CRCS project in Kuki. As a rule, *shareholders* are the only people who can be inducted as board members of the Cooperative, while secondary positions — i.e. board memberships of Chônaikai — are accessible for every resident of Kuki. Given its manner of selection, which is a direct appointment by former or the actual power holders, board membership of Chônaikai functions as a certificate of trustworthiness bestowed by the *shareholders.* Regardless of the strong influence of socio-culture in practice, the majority of residents of Kuki misrecognise the logic of domination as being directly related to motivation, competence and interest. In this sense, *shareholders* monopolise the power to recognise an individual's motivation and competence. The CRCS members and the city officials have worked closely together with the socio-culturally powerful. Unwittingly, they have contributed and continue to contribute to affirming the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki. The conclusion must be reached that "the motivated" are the socio-culturally powerful residents in Kuki, and that they reproduce the structure of power over time together with the CRCS members and the officials from Owase City.

Regarding my second sub-research question, my interviewees have clearly internalised the symbolic idea of self, imposed by the contemporary capitalist society. Except for one, they all identify themselves as a self-disciplined and an active labour. Perceiving themselves as being responsible, conscious, disciplined and in charge of their life situations, they believe that their current life situations are the direct results of their achievements. Reflecting upon their manner of organising the timeline of life story, which are explicitly meritocratic and socio-economic, I conclude that my interviewees believe their current life situations to be the direct results of their meritocratic and socio-economic achievements. They situate their current life goals as extension to their life histories of job changes and career developments. Their aspirations are uniformly adjusted to realistic and adequate levels. On the basis of their self-perception of their own achieved competences, the interviewees justify their social positions in Kuki. The one who asked me to omit him from the sample, actually, seems to have done so because of his belief of his own competence.

Socio-culture determines the social positions of residents in Kuki. At the same time, they believe that their current life situations to be the result of meritocratic and socio-economic achievements. Hermeneutically speaking, all the interviewees justify their social

positions as their own life achievements within socio-culturally assigned limitations. This observation provides an affirmative answer to my overall research question of, *Is an ideological view of one's life situation, as being a direct result of individual achievement, internalised and used by "the residents of Kuki" to perpetuate the existing structure of social inequality observed?* In effect, the research question was asked to test whether the mechanism underlying the perpetuation of social inequality can be explained by Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence. Given the affirmative answer, I proceed to show how symbolic violence actually occurs in Kuki.

8.5. Symbolic violence

The statistical inquiry in the social background data of Tokyo University student suggested the increasing symbolic value of merit in the rural area in Japan. On the basis of national statistics, Japanese scholars of social mobility study have argued that the students from rural areas have a lower level of advancement to prestigious higher education compared to the students from urban areas because of the lack of opportunity for suitable and sufficient education in the countryside.[260] The lack of opportunity for education in Owase City and in Kuki would appear to be blatantly obvious. There is only one high school and no institution for higher education in Owase City, and no educational institution whatsoever in Kuki. This picture fits well to the academic discourse of regional gap in terms of educational opportunity. However, in case of Owase City and Kuki, the physical lack of educational opportunity in their proximity has not stopped children from proceeding to higher education. On this point, Kariya *et al.* (2008) pointed out, the existing literature tends to disregard one simple and essential practical strategy of students of rural origin: some students in rural areas can choose to move to larger cities in order to overcome the lack of opportunity. This occurs, in my view, due to the common usage of the governmental statistics, especially the School Basic Survey by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science of Japan.[261] This survey reports the number of students in prefectures according to students' actual residential address. The scholars in the field of social stratification as well as the scholars of social inequality study, such as Sato (2000) and Tachibanaki (2013), often use this survey as their

[260] For example, see Tachibanaki (2013) and Sato (2000). I have showed that the students from rural areas are severely underrepresented in the selection results of Tokyo University; I did this so as to identify an inherent socio-cultural bias in social selection.
[261] The survey can be found in Japanese at:
http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/chousa01/kihon/1267995.htm

statistical basis. The result is to demonstrate the on-going situation of unequal distribution of educational opportunity in different prefectures. What is missing from this survey is the situation of students, who move to larger cities to gain access to wider range of educational opportunities. To put it simply, the existing literature regarding rural-urban disparity of educational opportunity fails to capture an accurate picture of social reality. Such an approach contributes to disregard the ongoing power struggles in the rural areas, and instead, to establish the homogeneous view of the rural area *the other* of big cities. As an example of affirmative science, it contributes to concealing the existing structure of social inequality and, instead, reinforces *symbolic liberalism*. Taking this observation as a starting point, I consider the mechanism by which individuals take active roles in the perpetuation of existing social inequality in Kuki via the CRCS project, using Bourdieu's idea of symbolic domination, on the basis of misrecognition of the power relations in everyday life mediated through the idea of Fair Equality of Opportunity.

8.5.1. Discourse of competence

Studying, working and living experiences in larger cities, especially in Tokyo, is viewed as a sign of competence by local residents in Owase City and Kuki. I shall refer to this point of view as a *discourse of competence*. I will explain that this discourse of competence has been produced without reflection upon the existing structures of social inequality. In case of Owase City, one informant from the Mayor's office of Owase City explained to me that depopulation has advanced because families in the region have been relatively affluent.[262] It was this affluence that made it possible for parents in Owase City to wish to send their children to recognised universities to get well-paid, white-collar jobs, and become successful in big cities:

> The higher the T-score they have, the easier and the earlier it is for them to leave Owase City for the larger cities. My way of putting it may be misleading, but actually only the stupid remain behind.[263] (…) To be honest, Owase has been suffering from severe depopulation, there have been fewer and fewer children, and it is far from Tokyo. Owase has become a "frontier" for depopulation and the ageing society, so to speak. Despite living on "the frontier", the residents of this region do not have a feeling of worrying "What is going to happen to our town?" at all.

[262] And this is true at least in terms of the national comparison of the average income in different prefectures. The average income of Mie prefecture is the 9th highest among 47 prefectures. See Tachibanaki (2013)

[263] T-Score is an indicator of academic competences in Japan. It indicates how deviate a given score from the mean of whole sample. 50 indicates the mean, the higher score means the more academic competence. Conversely, the lower score means the less academic competence. The university, which requires the highest T-score, is usually Tokyo University. Its law department, for example, required 78 in 2016.

It is apparent that he assumes that all the children will try to move from Owase City to the bigger cities to overcome the lack of opportunity for education. Actually, only those families with sufficient financial capacity to support their children see this strategy as natural and a real possibility. Here, misrecognition of the idea of equality of opportunity comes in; his belief in the equality of opportunity made him misrecognised the result of meritocratic social selection as simply deriving from individuals' differences in academic competence. This leads him to consider that those who have stayed in Owase City are less intellectually competent than those who left the city. Accordingly, he perceives the residents of Owase City, in general, as being incapable of perceiving the current situation of depopulation and aging society as problematic. In this manner, the contributions of those who returned from or moved from big cities are seen as essential for solving depopulation. On this basis, I argue that socio-economic differences within Owase City are translated into differences in competence due to a fundamental misunderstanding of FEO in practice.

The mainstream explanation of depopulation in Kuki shows a great similarity to the one for Owase city. It is said that the affluence of Kuki encouraged its families to send their children to high schools and universities in the big cities, especially in Tokyo, so that the children could get white-collar jobs in the big cities, instead of becoming fishermen. One interviewee explains:

> The profit made with the fishery has been enormous, so we could finance our town. We could finance our town enough solely with the redistribution of profit made with fishery. In that sense, a very basic communist social system had functioned well. Well, because of this affluence, well…people started to look outside (for jobs) and it caused a brain drain. The fishermen…are, as expected, dirty jobs, fish…scaly sticks and fishy smell lingers on, and it is fishy. In the era of rapid economic growth (in 1960s), (people thought) our own son should get a white-collar job so that he can live an easy life, well then, let's send him to university. The ones who have enough competence to go to university leave Kuki, right? Then, the rest is, well…I cannot say it out loud but, well, the rest are the ones who can't do such things. In short, the less intelligent people remained in this town and Kuki has been in decline ever since. (Interviewee A)

In his view, everyone is assumed to be free to leave the town in order to take advantage of the equally available opportunities; what makes the difference is the individual's competence. The ideological nature of the idea of equality of opportunity conceals the existing social inequality in Kuki. In reality, as in the case of Owase City, only those who are affluent consider such a strategy as natural and possible. In specific case of Kuki, we have already seen that individuals' socio-economic affluence is interlocked with their socio-cultural characteristics. In other words, this strategy is natural only for members of the Cooperative,

which makes up half the households in Kuki.[264] Indeed, *shareholders* have exclusively benefited from the annual dividend of the Cooperative:

> Basically, males can get a half share when they become twenty years old, and then a full share at the age of twenty-five. That's what I have heard. And, by the way, the reason why there are so many highly educated people in the town is because a half share is enough to pay off one's university tuition fee. (Interviewee F)

On the other hand, shareholders, the Strangers and female have not had any such privilege. The Cooperative has returned a part of its profits to the residents of Kuki in general by financing public infrastructures. However, for residents excluded from membership in the Cooperative, Kuki's affluence has not had any positive effect upon the affluence of their individual families. In fact, the financial arrangement has enhanced the financial *capability* of families of *shareholders,* but not of others. In this sense, *shareholders* have been more likely to achieve higher meritocratic value and socio-economic status compared to residents from socio-culturally inferior positions. It is predominantly *shareholders* who have benefitted from the discourse of competence by the simple fact that they became more likely to be those with competence, and those who remained in Kuki have ended up as those who were not competent to pass a university entrance examination or to get a job elsewhere.

In everyday life, the structure of social inequality of Kuki is naturalised, and thus invisible. More concretely, my interviewees placed importance on defining themselves as active labour, as individuals who are disciplined, responsible and in charge for their life choices, understanding their life situations as a direct result of their meritocratic achievements. This observation indicates that individuals contribute to perpetuating the existing structure of social inequality by doing their best to achieve what they desire. As a result, individuals' socio-cultural differences are translated into, and misrecognised as, individual differences in competence. This finding agrees with my theoretical formulation of social inequality as unequal power relationships and their perpetuation that are symbolically mediated. In the discourse of competence, the power relationships between *shareholders,* shareholders and the Strangers are translated into differences in competence based on meritocracy via the idea of equality of opportunity. This supports my theoretical statement that FEO contributes to translating socio-cultural characteristics at birth to individual competence.

[264] There are 286 households in Kuki, and among them 155 are the member households.

8.5.2. Symbolic domination via the community-building project

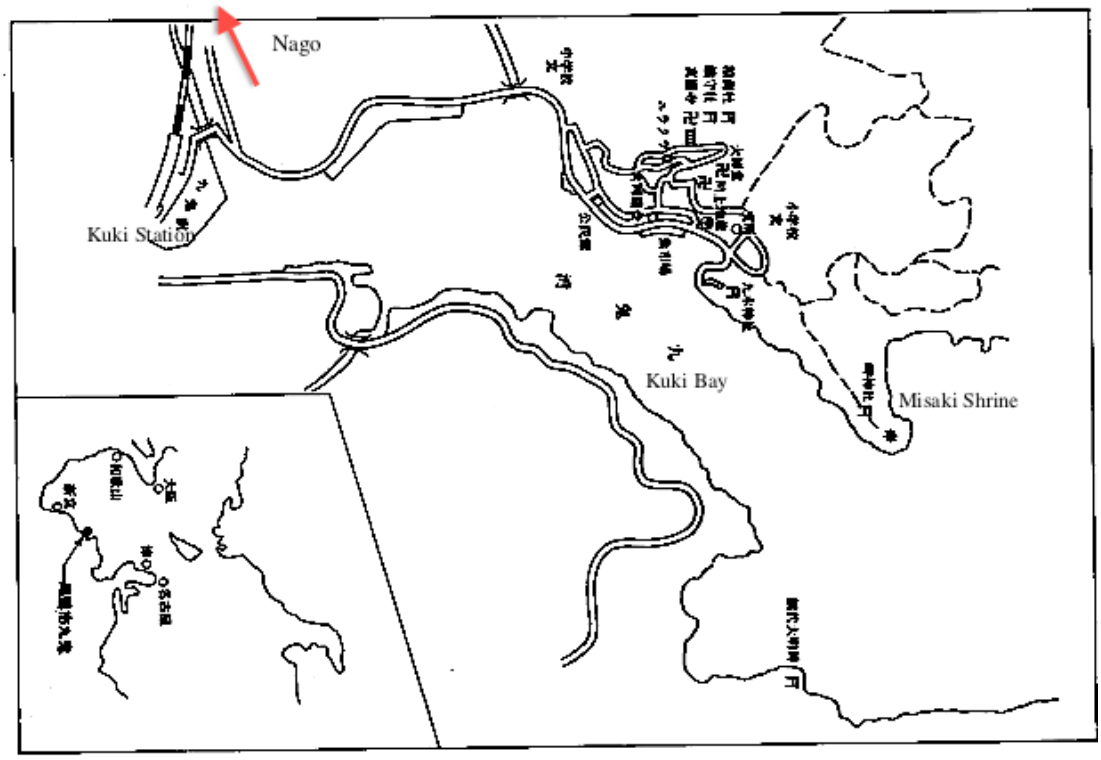
An overall discourse of competence legitimises the eight central figures as holding their powerful positions in the CRCS project. These central actors are so-called *U-turns (Uターン)*[265]; they left Kuki to go to high schools and universities, worked in big cities such as Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya, and then came back to the town after retirement or at the time of a relative's death. The returnee *shareholders* do not possess any specific intention to exercise power over the rest of residents in Kuki for the purpose of domination. I reemphasise that they genuinely believe that it is an expression of their good will, their motivation and interest to do something to improve the circumstance of those who live in Kuki now and in future generations.

Concealed within the logic of competence and motivation, the socio-cultural bias in the central figures affects the overall plan of community building activities. For example, the general goal, as represented by Chônaikai, is to revive the community to the way it used be in the residents' childhood, and to increase the number of residents in Kuki so that it will have a healthy economy, and a prosperous community life; one of the concrete suggestions is to enlarge the scale of local festivals to the size they used to be. The local festival, however, was held for the members of the Cooperative and the shareholders; the Strangers were excluded from the festivities. They were simply not there. In this sense, it is understandable that the existing scientific work regarding Kuki's "official" cultural activities often does not mention the existence of the Strangers.[266] For example, the map below is presented in Tanaka (1987)'s anthropological work documented Kuki's annual festivities in detail; however, it entirely lacks the account on the Strangers.[267]

[265] Their traits of domestic migration curves like a letter: U, from the hometown to the big cities and back to the hometown.

[266] Usui (1957)'s study mentions Nago and the most recently, Simoda *et al.* (2016)'s studies on the Cooperative captures the existence of Stranger.

[267] Author edited Tanaka (1987)'s map by adding place names: Nago, Kuki Station, Kuki Bay and Misaki Shrine, in English in order to make the map more understandable for non-Japanese readers.



(Map 4: An example of map of Kuki in existing research (Tanaka 1987, p. 67)

More recently, Nakanishi (2003) researched a pedagogic role of a drama play in Kuki's elementary school, which took the theme from a local annual festival. From a perspective of community building, she concluded that the drama play encouraged children to develop cultural attachment to their hometown; and thus, contributed to strengthen a cultural bond between children and adults of Kuki. Regrettably, this work also failed to mention the existence of the Strangers. Interviewee F states that the local festivals recall bitter memories of social exclusion for many of the Strangers. In the same line, Interviewee C recalls that his parents told him that he could not go to the town festival in his childhood. Giving another example of socio-spatial exclusion in CRCS project, I introduce the café that I chose as the first base for my fieldwork (see Map 3., p. 107). Situating itself in the centre of Kuki, this café is formally open for every residents of Kuki, and supposed to function as their only but important meeting place for a lively community life. However, in the middle of my fieldwork, I realised that people who gather there are only those who feel conformable there. In other words, the Strangers do not come to the café, because they do not want to meet *shareholders* and shareholders only to feel uncomfortable with each other. In short, a socio-cultural bias in the community-building plan symbolically drives the Strangers to exclude themselves from the activities both socially and spatially. Furthermore, the socio-cultural bias is reinforced via the community planning and its realisation. Consequently, the CRCS project

of Kuki constructs exclusive social space. However, as the Strangers voluntarily withdraw themselves from the activities, it appears for the eyes of the central figures that they are not interested in taking part. Here, individuals' socio-cultural differences are misrecognised in terms of differences in one's motivation.

Interviewee C's account is highly illuminating on this point. He grew up in Kuki as one of the Strangers, and left Kuki to attend a professional school in Nagoya. According to his narrative, as his family did not have anything to do with Kuki's affluence, they were poor, and this was the reason a company paid his high school tuition fees. After graduation, he worked in Tokyo and Nagoya. After retirement, he returned to Kuki, and decided to be part of the CBPs, because interviewee D asked him to make good use of his experience as a company employee in big cities. On one hand, he perceives himself as an outsider and still excluded; on the other hand, he justifies his engagement in the CBPs due to his perception that he is one of those who possess competence as a result of his experience living in big cities. From my theoretical standpoint, he accepts the logic of domination, and uses it to justify the power difference between himself and other residents. This has the effect of justifying the existence of social hierarchy via a justification of the logic of competence.

To sum up, socio-cultural power differences among the various actors of the CRCS project are not directly recognised as an expression of socio-culture *per se*; in stead, these individuals' socio-cultural differences are translated into and misrecognised as it being differences in one's competence and motivation. On this basis, residents of Kuki experience social inequality as agreement and/or disagreement with, in interviewee F's words, 'a way of thinking'. This suggests the working of habitus; everyone experiences their position in social hierarchy on the basis of disposition, perception and practice. In this manner, the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki has been unwittingly perpetuated in everyday life through community-building activities. Imposing their symbolic value onto the other residents, *shareholders* exercise symbolic domination. By accepting, internalising and using this value, the dominated entangle themselves in, borrowing Sen (2010)'s term, "a protest-free tolerance of social asymmetry and discrimination", i.e. symbolic violence. When disagreement and sensations of feeling uncomfortable with these values becomes too great, those at the bottom of social hierarchy have no other recourse than to self-exclude themselves. My conclusion is that Bourdieu's idea of symbolic violence adequately explains the mechanism of the perpetuation of existing social inequality in Kuki's everyday life.

Chapter 9. Conclusion: Rethinking social inequality

9.1. Introduction

The results of my empirical analysis provide an affirmative answer to my overall research question and, hermeneutically, to my theoretical discussion. By extension, I have established the adequacy of the theory of symbolic violence to explain the mechanism of perpetuation of the historically constituted structure of social inequality in one case in a contemporary capitalist society, namely Japan. As a conclusion to my study, firstly, I summarise my empirical findings. Thereafter I situate the situation of Kuki within the larger politico-historical context in terms of state domination. This is important because Kuki is not a social space that exists in complete isolation from the state governance. On the contrary, it is a social space where state governance and the local structure of social hierarchy coalesce. Taking my point of departure in this insight, I refer back to the original starting point of my research, i.e. what is the relationship between social inequality and economic disparity in contemporary society? This hermeneutical view brings to a close my doctoral endeavour. Finally, I suggest a possible future direction for this line of research.

9.2. Summary of empirical findings

At my fieldwork site, all the residents who are socially included in its community life are hierarchically related according to its specific socio-culture: *shareholders,* shareholders and strangers. This existing structure of social inequality is perpetuated via *community-building projects (CBP)*. On the one hand, the socio-culturally powerful individuals in the village are the most active members in the CBP since they believe that they are the only ones with competence and motivation to realise the project potential. The remainder of the residents participate in the CBP as it planned and scheduled by the *shareholders* together with those who are trusted by the *shareholders*. On the other hand, the socially marginalised, who are the strangers to the village, have hitherto been excluded from the village's community life by being stigmatised as violent, poor and uneducated. In the particular case of CBP, they are arbitrarily labelled as being unmotivated and uninterested, and this partly coincides with their lack of any participatory ground, i.e. membership in Kuki's neighbourhood association or *Chônaikai*.

However, this inegalitarian social position taking among residents is not recognised as being discriminatory as it derives directly from the historically constituted structure of social inequality within the village. This occurs because the social reality in Kuki fits well with the logic of meritocratic distribution of social positions. Due to the working of *habitus*, everyone experiences social inequality on the basis of their disposition, perception and practice. In this manner, the unequal social reality is *misrecognised,* naturalised and justified. Elaborating on this insight, all of interviewees identify themselves with the modernist idea of the *self*, someone who is free and equal, and in charge of their life situations regardless of their positions within the existing structure of social inequality. Among those who are socially included, both *shareholders* and shareholders alike, justify their socio-economic positions as being what they deserve when they reflect on their self-supposed amounts of talent and effort. This is precisely the mechanism identified in the theory of *symbolic violence*. Those who are socially excluded experience the exclusion in terms of differences in their "ways of thinking". This difference makes them feel uncomfortable about being part of the community life. When the degree of discomfort is too large, they choose, ultimately, to withdraw themselves from Kuki's community life more or less altogether.

9.2.1. Situating Kuki in the context of state domination

A popular perception of CBP advocates it as a grass-root local activity that coincides with a power shift from the central government to the local residents in the sphere of local governance. The majority of existing works on CRCS projects and CBP are often written with the purpose of ameliorating its implementation; socio-political criticism of the CRCS project in itself lies outside their academic concerns.[268] As one example of a relevant critical work we have Ohno (2008). In his work we find the case of a conflict of political interests between the local and the central government on one side and the local residents of Kuki's neighbouring village on the other concerning the world heritage registration of a pilgrimage route to Ise shrine. A few local residents have resisted against the registration process because it would intervene in their everyday life, especially because it would restrict them from engaging in forestry and the management of vermin. Nevertheless, the central and local government still seek to proceed with the registering the route as a national cultural heritage for the sake of local interests. Ohno signals alarm at the risk of political domination by the State via CBP. Sharing the same concern, my work looks into the existing structure of social

[268] See for example, Nishimura et al. (2012), Takagishi and Kiminami (2012), Taguchi (2013) and Zushi (2013)

inequality in Kuki and its relationship to state domination. In my fieldwork site, introducing CBP did not cause any substantial change in the hierarchical relationship constructed between the central government, the local government, and the local residents. This occurs because the logic of domination in use in Kuki, i.e. meritocracy, does not disturb the already constructed hierarchy, which runs from the central government, through the local government, *shareholders,* shareholders and finally to the strangers. This is to say that the socio-culturally powerful in Kuki accept and take over the logic of state domination and exercise, in turn, symbolic violence on themselves and symbolic domination over the rest of the residents in Kuki. More precisely, the *shareholders* legitimise the higher, or elevated, position of the central and the local government compared to Kuki as a political body. At the same time, they justify their own social positions within Kuki using the discourse of competence and motivation.

By the fact that the *shareholders* and external political actors implement this state-lead economic development project, the CRCS project in Kuki is, substantially, a policy to integrate social conditions preferable for *shareholders* into the spatial and social planning of the community. Thus, the project contributes to justifying and reinforcing the existing structure of social inequality, and the neo-liberal shift of governing discourse at the national level advances while integrating the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki. In this process, the historically constituted political process to reinforce the rural-urban divide, and the political structure that enables this political process, do not receive any criticism whatsoever. Regardless of popular discourse regarding the CBP, the CRCS does not call the overall power relationship between the government and people into question. This does not mean that the situation in Kuki will simply remain unchanged. The study field of peripheralisation that deals with the urban- rural divide, with particular focus on the temporal characteristics of social lives, suggests the likelihood of Kuki's further subordination. Scholars of peripheralisation grasp the rural area as a social space that is left behind by the process of *social acceleration* occurring in the centre of the economic, political and social sphere. On the basis of this idea, the widening gap between urban and rural life is explained as a combined creation resulting from social acceleration in the centre and stagnation in the periphery, i.e. in a given community. In this process, the study field posits that the centre subordinates the periphery into its map of domination by integrating the social structures of the given peripheral community into its sphere of influence, yet at a distance. This type of integration guarantees a widening socio-temporal gap between the centre and the periphery

that, in turn, contributes to consolidating the subordinated position of the given community in, and as, the periphery. When I reflect upon this theoretical framework in relation to Kuki, a given adjustment of the social space in Kuki in accordance with neoliberal governance, while simultaneously maintaining the structure of social inequality deriving from the past, suggests further *peripheralisation* of Kuki. On one hand, engagement with the neo-liberal governing discourse entails dislocating local political issues from their historically constituted socio-cultural contexts. On the other hand, local issues in Kuki necessarily embody a socio-cultural bias that is institutionalised in everyday life. As the existence of the structure of existing social inequality has recently rendered increasingly invisible through participation in the CRCS project, a further consolidation of the unequal social reality in Kuki seems to be inevitable. It will manifest itself as a widening socio-temporal discrepancy between the field of national politics and everyday life in Kuki, and it may well have consequences in terms of the political, economical and social subordination of Kuki to larger cities via the central government. In line with theoretical arguments advanced by several authors, I argue, on the basis of my empirical results, that grass-root localism does not automatically result in political empowerment in a given local community.[269] Moreover, successful integration of a given local community to the dictates of state governance does not necessarily mean an improvement of the existing situation of social inequality at the local level. As long as the field of national politics disregards the relevance of the socio-cultural context of political issues at the local level, the troubleshooting initiatives of the central government remain incapable of delivering its policy objectives on equal terms to all the residents of Kuki. On the contrary, it reinforces and *naturalises* the existing social inequality within Kuki. As the management bodies responsible for the self-organised living community, the significance of the Cooperative and the *Chônaikai* has been consolidated. At the time of my research, the perpetuation of the existing structure of social inequality in Kuki has been naturalised behind the politically reinforced urban-rural disparity.

The residents of Kuki, who are conscious, wilful and rational, have done their best to achieve individually different desirable lives, dealing with the results of their participation in social competitions throughout their lives. In this process, the residents have repeatedly readjusted their life goals to self-established realistic levels. Through tuning their views of the lives of which they are capable and their aspirations, they have come to perceive their life

[269] For example, see Shibuya (2004: in Watado 2007), Nihei (2005), Beetz *et al.* (2008) and Williams *et al.* (2014)

situations as their own achievements. As *shareholders* consider that everyone in society is more or less free and equal, they apply this perception not only to themselves but also to the other members of the society. However, as we have seen, Kuki has a systematic mechanism to create differences in the amount of resources available to its residents to realise their capabilities and reach the lives to which they aspire. On one hand, due to their belief in FEO, *shareholders* do not recognise the discrepancy between egalitarian ideology and social reality. For their eyes, the *accident* of birth is invisible. On the other hand, the people who live at the bottom of Kuki's social hierarchy do not possess sufficient political, economical and social power to initiate change at the institutional level within Kuki. As far as Kuki is concerned, the integrative policy formulated with the idea of FEO has not resulted in achieving the egalitarian fair society that Rawls once envisioned.

9.3. Relationship between social inequality and economic disparity

By way of concluding my study, I would like to revisit the question that was my starting point when I began my research, namely the relationship between social inequality and economic disparity in contemporary society. At the beginning of this study, following Shirahase (2014), I differentiated between the concepts of social inequality and economic disparity. Social inequality is the "outward manifestation of an unfair valuation of a difference", which "no amount of 'effort' or 'ability' can alter", because it is historically constituted in a given society. On the other hand, disparity means the "a gap in an ordered rating", designating the measurability of differences. The justification of its existence, particularly in the field of politics, does not evoke a feeling of injustice. Accordingly, social exclusion is a systematic exclusion of a certain group of people, who suffer from an unequal valuation of differences as a group category, from participation in the ordered rating.

I revisit this differentiation now in the light of my empirically confirmed results. An existing social hierarchy consists of different layers of socio-culture constructed in a specific locality over time. For instance, one layer in Kuki is comprised of the *shareholders*, shareholders and *Strangers;* another layer is comprised of males and females, and so on. Individuals are born into this existing socio-cultural context. While living her life, an individual develops, over time, a realistic sense of the social reality of possibilities via the working of habitus. She learns to adjust her perceptions, disposition and practices to an internalised sense of adequacy. In this sense, socio-culture is embodied socially constructed differences that are symbolically expressed in one's actions via the working of habitus. Other

individuals can decode this symbolic meaning, if the individual is familiar with the symbolic universe. It is important to note that sociocultural differences between people tend to be invisible to the individual's eye, especially in the case of those who are socially included. This makes social inequality a *historically structured* "manifestation of an unfair valuation of difference". Its exercise and the way that is experienced at the level of the individual are symbolic and, consequently, not likely to be perceived as unfair. For those who are socially excluded, the existence of socio-cultural differences is materialised in terms of a total absence of the benefits that normally derive from the social institutions for the socially included. They are, therefore, concrete and visible.

Economic disparity can still be defined as the gap in an ordered socio-economic rating. However, my empirical study reveals that it is not the core problem of social injustice regarding unequal social reality, something that the prevalent research paradigm suggests. Departing from a socio-culturally unequal starting point, in contemporary society individuals take part in social competitions for merit. On one hand, the idea of fair equality of opportunity, which does not specify its timing, results in introducing the weight of one's socio-cultural characteristics and socio-culturally determined socio-economic environment at birth to the later stages of social competition. On the other hand, taking part in meritocratic social competitions, individuals come to identify themselves as being free and equal individuals who are in charge of their own life situations, i.e. *the punctual self*. This is say that governance with the idea of FEO, which is based on the modernist idea of the *self,* disciplines everyone to internalise a self-serving logic of domination, i.e. meritocracy, without achieving much change in social reality. Indeed, I situate this *misrecognition* of unequal social reality as being the direct outcome of one's amount of effort or talent as the key to perpetuating unwittingly the existing structure of social inequality in contemporary society. *Symbolic liberalism* makes it possible for someone to live her everyday life without reflecting upon the existing structure of social inequality in the society in which she lives. Without active reflection, the existing structure of social inequality remains unseen and invisible. Supposedly free and equal individuals compete for more socially desirable goods, within their own version of a realistic range of aspiration, such as an academic degree from a better-known university and/or a more prestigious job, and this leads them to accumulate different amounts of socio-economic capital. In this sense, economic disparity is "a socio-economic gap measured in the ordered rating", *which is necessarily influenced by one's socio-cultural characteristics, however and at the same time, it makes the existence of socio-*

cultural inequality invisible. This theoretical statement was confirmed at least in the case of Kuki.

Measuring socio-economic differences between people does not necessarily measure the degree of unfairness of social injustice in a society. In this sense, social inequality is not translatable to economic disparity. They do not exist in a simple binary relationship. Studies that measure the degree of economic disparity so as to analyse its fluctuation are, *in themselves*, meaningful. However, without reflecting upon these results while taking into account the underlying socio-culture in a given society, the risk of producing a descriptive study of politically justified differences between individuals is near at hand. This is because the socio-economic positions of socially included individuals appear to correspond to the amount of effort and/or other natural attributes that they have in the contemporary meritocratic society, when the micro-perspective is taken. In this way, we immediately lose sight of socio-culture and also of social (in)justice. This type of study, which is produced without reflection on the underlying structure of social inequality, will contribute to concealing the mechanism of the persisting structure of social inequality and rendering it invisible, i.e. *affirmative science*. This leads me to think that all cases of economic disparity are interpretable from the perspective of sociocultural inequality and social (in)justice, since socio-cultural context necessarily influences the results of social competition, no matter whether it is socially acceptable or not. The economic activities of an individual in a given society appear to be essential and constitute the core of human activities, and this is especially so in the context of the capitalist society. However, it was not a fundamental determinant of social position in Kuki. Instead, the core was socio-culture, historically constructed and therefore locally specific structures of a social hierarchy of power.

9.4. Space for further research

This study introduced a locally specific structure of social inequality in Kuki, and explained its mechanism of perpetuation with the theory of symbolic violence made possible by being concealed within the ideological effect of Fair Equality of Opportunity. The successful demonstration of the relevance of Bourdieu's theory to Japanese society, firstly, contributes to the field of Bourdieu's study by adding one more case to its theoretical body. In addition, it supports its important theoretical implications. The characteristics of social inequality in a given society are necessarily historically specific and therefore heterogeneous. However, the

mechanism for the justification of social inequality can be identical in different societies. This statement has been confirmed with the case of Kuki. In order to generalise these theoretical statements, it is necessary to enlarge the number of case studies. The data presented in existing research on CRCS projects elsewhere in Japan suggest that similar situations of position taking by the local powerful in on-going projects do occur. This provides me with an enormous space for further research and comparison. In addition, its explanatory power is only temporary. Therefore, I suggest the necessity of follow-up studies in Kuki and elsewhere in the future. Besides engaging the field of Bourdieu study, my research deconstructed one common assumption in the field of social inequality study, namely that achievement of equality of opportunity will results in a fair and therefore justifiable distribution of socially valued resources in a society. For this purpose, I demonstrated empirically the inbuilt mechanism of FEO, which results in persisting social inequality. This suggests the necessity of future research focusing on the mechanism of the perpetuation of social inequality concealed within the logic of freedom and equality via policies that aim at making social competition more inclusive. Finally, the nature of relationship between social inequality and economic disparity is an important yet understudied topic. As I mentioned at the very beginning of my thesis, this question is central for any type of research regarding unequal social reality. My study results open an avenue of research towards elucidating the nature of inequality in advanced capitalist societies, for example the nature of elites, the middle class and the precariat, and its relationship to pre-capitalist structures of social inequality. Ultimately, I believe that this line of research may result in an effective means to understand the nature of the capitalist society as a whole.

Appendix

Appendix A: The remoteness of Students' hometown from its regional centre.

	1975	1976	1977	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985 - 1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Big city	36.9	36.2	47.3	35.2	33.6	35.6	47	34.1	35.4	NA	39.7	37.1	35	38.4	36.2	NA
City	37.2	38.6	37.1	39.9	41.4	40.4	40.5	43.4	37.7	NA	41.4	42.8	43.1	43	42.8	NA
Small City	16.5	15.1	10.1	14.4	16.9	14.8	9.4	14.2	11.2	NA	10.8	10.2	12.2	11.2	11.2	NA
County	9.4	10.1	5.5	9.8	7.5	8.9	2.8	8.3	8.5	NA	6.9	9.5	8.9	7.2	8.6	NA
Male	784	803	0	840	785	765	0	756	962	NA	918	806	741	108 2	114 2	734
Female	0	0	615	0	0	0	706	0	88	NA	267	236	201	312	359	297
Sample total	784	803	615	840	785	765	706	756	105 0	NA	118 5	104 2	942	139 4	150 1	103 1

Source: The survey of actual life situation of Tokyo University students (1975-2014)

*Big cities are cities that have more than one million inhabitants.
Cities are administrative units, which have less than one million and more than 100,000 inhabitants.
Small cities are an administrative unit, which have less than 100,000 and more than 10,000 inhabitants. County is an administrative unit, which is outside of cities.
*Data of 1985-1997, 2004, 2009, 2011-2014 are not available, because the survey did not include any question regarding the remoteness of students' place of origin. Instead, the survey asked the place of origin in terms of prefectures.
*Sample population of the survey changes year by year.
Sample population of 1975, 1976, 1979-1981, 1983 is randomly chosen undergraduate-male students.
Sample population of 1977 and 1982 are all the undergraduate-female students.
Sample population of 1978, 1985, 1992, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2011 and 2013 is randomly chosen graduate students, including both genders.
Sample population of the rest of years is randomly chosen undergraduate students, including both genders.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Stages of analysis	Central Question	Focusing questions	Desired information
Preliminary stage: The Analysis of Narrative	Please tell me about yourself.	Please introduce yourself Please tell me about your current living situation.	What do the interviewees think as important to introduce about themselves? Are they touched by symbolic value of *punctual self?*
Providing a plot	What is your current life goal?	Do you have a life goal at the moment? Can you tell me about it?	What is the life goal of the interviewees?
Secondary stage: The Narrative Analysis	Where does your current life goal come about?	Please describe your life path, which brought you to wish the current goal.	When is the starting point of life story? How do they organise their timeframe? Is it in socio-economic or in meritocratic way? What are the criteria for choosing specific events?

Social data

Gender Male O Female O
Age _____
Place of birth _____
Domestic immigration Yes O No O
Place of residence _____
Highest educational title
Employment type _____

Appendix C:

Fig. 1 photograph of one natural boundary between neighbourhood groups in Kuki

(Author photographed this image in 2015)

Appendix D: Summary of interview transcripts

Interviewee A
He gave me his name, age, brief educational background and occupational career, and current occupation. Regarding his current living situation, he introduced his job to me; he is an employee of the fishermen's cooperative in Kuki. His current life goal is, firstly, to train new fishermen and, secondly, to start up a business renting empty houses in Kuki. He organised his life story as a history of job changes. His father decided for him that he would go to a university in Osaka when he was in the third year of high school. After his graduation from university, he started a nursery company for breams, and had a side job as a truck driver. During this time, he sold his house to finance his family life and his business. As he had a hard time finding a place to live in Kuki, even though there are a lot of empty houses there, he started to have the dream of starting a business renting empty houses. He closed his business and decided to become an employee of Kuki's fishermen's cooperative, because he has caused enough trouble to his family. As a fisherman, he wishes to contribute to training new fishermen.

Interviewee B
His gave me his name, age, lineage, brief educational background and occupational career, and his current job. He is currently head of the Cooperative and town chief of Kuki. His current life goal is related to the CRCS project — he wants to invite people from outside to live in Kuki and to revive town events such as fireworks and festivals, as it used to be. His life story is organised according to his job changes. After high school graduation, he first got a job as a car mechanic. However, he realised that he would need to continue to higher education for his future. He went to university in Tokyo. Without graduating from the university, he got a job in a company managing golf clubs. After ten years, he came back to Kuki, and earned his living working as a fisherman. After a while, he found a job as a hotel employee in Chiba prefecture, through his relatives. As his parents became old, he returned to Owase City to become the janitor of a hostel for Chubu Electric Company. His dream of reviving Kuki comes from his position as a town chief.

Interviewee C
He gave me his name, age and his current job. He currently does newspaper delivery, and works as a board member of Chônaikai and head of the youth club. His current life goal is to stop depopulation, and to work for reviving Kuki as much as he can. He organised his life story as a story of job changes. He left Kuki when he was sixteen to go to a professional school in Nagoya for job training. He was financed by a company and got a job at the same company afterwards. He moved to Tokyo and became a sales manager for a supermarket company. As he has experienced social exclusion in his childhood, he did not wish to come back to Kuki at first. However, when his mother fell ill, he decided to come back to the town. As he could not take part in the town festival in his childhood due to his status as a Kiryûmin, he enjoys organising town festivals as head of the youth club.

Interviewee D
He gave me his name, age, brief career background and the numbers of times he has moved. Currently, he has a goal to increase the number of residents in Kuki. His story is organised as a career development due to the fact that he has worked for one company for forty years. He went to high school in Nagoya, and moved to Tokyo to learn design at an art college. He started his career as an industrial designer and then worked in the sales division of the same company. He had already decided to come back to Kuki after his retirement when he left Kuki when he was sixteen years old. He wishes to make good use of his talent in developing an idea and getting things done, which he had developed in his company life. He is currently involved in the community-building projects because of his position as a vice-head of Chônaikai, and a board member of the Cooperative.

Interviewee E

He gave me his name, age, current jobs and social positions in Kuki. He has a life goal of making good pictures as he paints. His story develops according to his job changes. He realised his talent in painting when he was nine years old thanks to his teacher at elementary school. He aimed to go to an art college in Tokyo, but failed. He pursued his career in an art industry, and worked for nearly ten years in Tokyo and Saitama. He came back to Kuki when his parents fell sick, because he is the eldest son in the family. He got a job as a forest-warden through the Cooperative, and he paints in addition to his work. Currently, he also has positions in Chônaikai and the Cooperative.

Interviewee G

He gave me his name, a brief educational background and career history. He also explained the reason why he lives in Kuki even though he is originally from Owase city. He does not have any dream or life goal at the moment except for his hope to live an ordinary life. His story is organised according to his job changes. He started his story from the dream he had before he got his first job. He dreamed of becoming a motorbike racer, and he got a job as a car mechanic. As he has worked in a company, he did not have any time to go to the car race circuits for practice. Since then, he has changed job four times. He changed his jobs because the working conditions did not meet his needs in terms of his physical condition and income. Since one year previously, he has been working as a fisherman at the fishermen's cooperative of Kuki. He wants to become a trained fisherman so that his boss will not yell at him.

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